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"A. B." — We have received a letter from one who signs himself "A. B." If he had given his name (in confidence, of course) we would perhaps have published his letter. He has some difficulties concerning the conduct of Moses in the case of Madianites. The best instinct of "A. B.'s" nature revolts against the punishment inflicted on th se people. We do not know whether he is looking for information or controversy; in any case, we do not like the spirit and tone of his letter. Neither do we propose to reply fully to his difficulties. We may remind him, however, that the "best spark in his nature" is his reason, and we believe that a better use of his reason, coupled with some humility and a spirit of reverence towards God and a little study, would no doubt enable him to see straighter. We may remind him that there is a vast difference between the time when Moses lived and the twentieth century. Moreover, the apparitions of God to the patriarchs were generally angels representing God, and speaking in His name. Let "A. B," remember, further that God is Master of life and death, and that sin—even venial sin—is a greater evil than all the physical evils imaginable. Now, women and children were ordinarily spared after a battle. That was the custom. But the great Lord of life and death was pleased to order otherwise in the present case, in detestation of the wickedness of the people who, by the counsel of Bala. h sent their women among the Hebrelit on purpose to draw them fr God. Only the girls under twelve ars age were reserved; and as the ende minds might yet receive the impression of virtue, by a proper educat the might, one day, be married som of the Hebrews; the older ome were put to death not only thei sins but also on account of the nac they were to the Israelites thelves The boys were all slain, ei be cause they might be inclined sent what they would regard as ajury done to their relations, or ause they were all consecrated to phegor; the first-born to be hisests, the rest to be victims, if neces to avert any evil. But Moses p ved the lives of those girls who it be presumed innocent, and who m live to do good, while he took the nge of the Lord on the rest. Tonish sin is not cruelty; to put thes to death, when God ordered it, wnly a physical evil, and it was ight to avoid a greater. The hole affair was abnormal and to extraordinary circumstances.

WEDDING BELLS

THE

DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION:

BEING

AN INQUIRY

CONCERNING THE

INFALLIBILITY, INSPIRATION, AND AUTHORITY OF HOLY WRIT.

BY THE REV. JOHN MACNAUGHT, M. A., OXON,
INCUMBENT OF ST. CHRYSOSTOM'S CHURCH, EVERTON, LIVERPOOL.

"The first book written by an Orthodox Clergyman which decidedly denies the doctrine of Scriptural Infallibility."
Christian Inquirer.

"Distinguished by a fearless investigation of truth, and an uncompromising hostility to deception and make-believe."
Westminster Review.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY J. P. MENDUM.
1870.

TO

ALL RULERS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER THOUGHTFUL PERSONS

THIS VOLUME

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THEIR HUMBLE SERVANT

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

By way of preface to this Essay the author has only to say that, in the course of a protracted and earnest inquiry, he has not found any one book or teacher to give him a definite and satisfactory explanation of the very important term "Inspiration." There is, in one school of thought, much which has been written ably, undeniably and, no doubt, honestly in opposition to the common idea of Inspiration; and there is, in another school of thought, not a little which has been written truly, ingeniously and piously in support of the common idea: but few, if any, earnest thinkers will call in question the desirableness, not to say the necessity, of some simple and self-consistent treatise which—while, on the one hand, it shall contain a refutation and abandonment of what is untenable in the popular notion and, on the other hand, an assertion and demonstration of the true doctrine of Inspiration—shall at the same time vindicate a high reverence for the just authority of Holy Writ and shall show how this reverence for the sacred volume is to be reconciled both with the articles of existing Creeds and with the startling facts, bearing on Inspiration, which

are made apparent by a diligent analysis of Scripture itself.

The object of this Essay is thus to be destructive of prevailing errors; to be constructive of a true doctrine of inspiration; to uphold the highest reasonable authority for Holy Writ; and to give ease and security, in Christian faith, to all piously and honestly disposed minds.

How far that object has been prosecuted in a becoming manner, or has been effectually attained, it is for the reader to decide: but, whatever may be the public decision on this point, it will ever be a source of happiness to the author to feel that he has given expression to his opinions candidly and, to the best of his power, clearly.

EVERTON, LIVERPOOL:
March 28, 1856.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

Page

SEC. 1.—Christ the one foundation and the human mind with its various prepossessions the groundwork - 1
SEC. 2.—Reason and Faith in connexion with Religion generally and with Inspiration particularly - - - 1
SEC. 3.—The effect of confused notions of Inspiration on the several classes of society - - - - - 2
SEC. 4.—The general danger to faith of such confusion, a motive for the undertaking of this Essay in the interest of Christian belief - - - - - - - - 5
SEC. 5.—The author's experience of benefit from the views about to be propounded - - - - - - - - 5
SEC. 6.—The terms "plenary," "verbal," "mechanical," "dynamical," "suggestive," and "superintendent," not employed in these pages as epithets of Inspiration - 7
SEC. 7.—The confirming of faith, the removing unbelief, and the promotion of charity are the objects of this Essay - - - - - - - - - - 8
SEC. 8.—The arrangement of the work in five Books - - 10
SEC. 9.—Acknowledged sources whence the materials of this Essay have been drawn - - - - - - 10
SEC. 10.—The solemnity of the present Inquiry fully recognised 11

BOOK I.

DOES THE BIBLE PERMIT US TO REGARD ITS TEACHING AS INFALLIBLE?

CHAP. I.—The Inspired Book and its supposed infallibility.
SEC. 1.—Importance of ascertaining the meaning of Inspiration as a characteristic of Holy Writ - 13
SEC. 2.—No definition to be found ready to hand in Scripture - - - - - - - - - 14
SEC. 3.—Definitions of "Inspiration" in the dictionaries of Johnson, Richardson, Robinson, Eden and Webster - - - - - - 15
SEC. 4.—The signification popularly attached to "Inspiration" - - - - - - - - 17
SEC. 5.—The duty of promulgating clear views on this subject - - - - - - - - - 18
SEC. 6.—The precise meaning of the term "Infallible" - - - - - - - - - 19

Page

CHAP. II.—Scientific and Historical Errors observable in Holy Writ.

SEC. 1.—Our investigation will not turn on the bearing of modern science on the theories of the Scripture-writers - - - - - - - - 21

SEC. 2.—The genealogies of Our Lord - - 23

A.—Matthew's account of the genealogy of Jesus - - - - - - - - - 23

1. What if errors in transcription be acknowledged? - - - - - - - - 24

2. The particular version of the Bible with which our inquiry is concerned - - 25

3. Unsatisfactoriness of all modes of "explaining away" difficulties - - - 27

B.—Luke's account of the genealogy of Jesus compared with that of Matthew - - 27

SEC. 3.—The residence of the Holy Family - 30

SEC. 4.—The supposed prophecy "He shall be called a Nazarene" - - - - - - 33

SEC. 5.—Hosea's words "Out of Egypt have I called my son" - - - - - - - 34

SEC. 6.—Comparison of the two narratives of the temptation of Christ - - - - - - 35

SEC. 7.—Frequent discrepancies in recording the words said to have been spoken or written on any given occasion - - - - - - 38

A.—Examples of such discrepancies in the superscription of the Cross - - - - 38

B.—Example of such discrepancies in Peter's denials - - - - - - - - 39

C.—The census by David, the purchase of Aceldama, the hour of the crucifixion, the numbers of the plague-stricken, are further illustrations of such inaccuracy - - - - - - 42

SEC. 8.—The people, learned and unlearned, are noticing these discrepancies - - - 43

CHAP. III.—The existence of such Scriptural Errors recognised by the learned and the pious.

SEC. 1.—Forced harmonies abandoned and the truth confessed - - - - - - - 44

SEC. 2.—The opinions of several learned and eminent divines - - - - - - - 45

A.—The opinion of Neander - - - 45

B.—The opinion of Bishop Burnet - - 46

C.—The opinion of Professor Tholuck - - 47

D.—The opinion of Bishop Hinds (Norwich) - 47

E.—The opinion of Archbishop Whately (Dublin) - - - - - - - - 48

F.—The opinion of another English Bishop - 49

Page

G.—The opinion of Bishop Hampden (Hereford) - - - - - - - - - 51
Sec. 3.—These writers own to Scriptural errors in every thing except Religion - - - 53
Chap. IV.—Are there no religious errors in Holy Writ? - - 55
Sec. 1—Does the Bible permit us to regard its religious teaching as infallible? - - - - 55
A.—The history of Jael - - - - - 55
B.—Some of the imprecations of Jeremiah, the Psalmists and Paul - - - - - 57
C.—The Jewish belief or disbelief of man's life in a future world - - - - - - 58
D.—The Apostolic belief as to the time of Christ's second coming to judge the world - 61
E.—Paul's argument in 1 Cor. xv. 19, 32 - 67
Sec. 2.—The Conculsion, an answer to the question of this Book - - - - - - 69

BOOK II.

WHAT REASON IS THERE FOR EXPECTING THE BIBLE TO BE INFALLIBLE?

Introduction.—The self-consistency of truth in its bearings on this question - - - - - - - - - 70
Chap. I.—Examination of the argument from Miracles for Inspirational Infallibility - - - - - 72
Chap. II.—Examination of the Argument from Prophecy - 74
Chap. III.—Examination of the argument from the Authority claimed for Scripture by the New Testament writers - - - - - - - - - - 78
A.—The opinion of the Jews on this subject 79
B.—The opinion of the Evangelists - - 80
C.—Alleged utterance of Jesus on this subject 80
Chap. IV.—Argument in favour of Inspirational Infallibility from the supposed impossibility of Scripture-writers ascertaining, by natural means, many particulars of which they treat - - - - - - - - 92
A.—Evangelists recording scenes at which they were not present - - - - - - - - 93
B.—Genesis describing creation antecedent to man's existence - - - - - - - - 95
Chap. V.—Argument for Inspirational Infallibility from the excellence and effectiveness of Holy Writ - - 100
Chap. VI.—Argument for Inspirational Infallibility from Scriptural Canonicity - - - - - - - - 103
A.—The Old Testament Canon and the Apocrypha - - - - - - - - - - 104
B.—The New Testament Canon - - - 109

Pa

CHAP. VII.—The promises by which our Lord is supposed to have guaranteed the Inspirational Infallibility of the *New* Testament - - - - - - - 114
CHAP. VIII.—The argument for Scriptural Infallibility drawn from the supposed nature of divine Inspiration - - - - - - - - - 127
CHAP. IX.—The *a priori* argument for Inspirational Infallibility 130
CHAP. X.—The *a posteriori* argument for Inspirational Infallibility 132
CHAP. XI.—Resume and Conclusion—Answer to the question of this Book and outline of the method to be employed in the two succeeding Books - - 136

BOOK III.

WHAT IS THE TRUE MEANING OF THE TERM "INSPIRATION?"

CHAP. I.—Preliminary observations - - - - - 139
SEC. 1.—The idea of "Inspiration," but not the word, is in Scripture - - - - - 139
SEC. 2.—The vague application of the terms "Ghost," "Spirit," and their equivalents in the Greek and in the Hebrew - - - - 141
CHAP. II.—Use of the terms "Ruach" (Spirit) and "Neshamah" (Breath) in the Old Testament - - - 143
CHAP. III.—Use of "Pneuma" (Spirit) in the New Testament - 151
The difference between "genius" and "Inspiration" 158
CHAP. IV.—The use of the word Inspiration in its true and ancient sense among the churches of Christendom 160
Definition of the term "Inspiration" - - - 162

BOOK IV.

WHAT IS THE JUST AUTHORITY OF HOLY WRIT?

CHAP. I.—Introductory matter.
SEC. 1.—The present position of our argument - 164
SEC. 2.—Reactionary disrespect of the Bible to be eschewed - - - - - - - - 165
SEC. 3.—Only when intelligently comprehended can the most hallowed precepts be to us God's Word - - - - - - - - - 167
CHAP. II.—Special considerations urging to a study of the Bible as a most interesting and important document - 168

Page

A.—The Bible's Antiquity combined with its present hold on the minds of men - - 168

B.—The Bible the only Book which, through the ages of the Reformation, the Schoolmen, and the Fathers, is pointed back to as informing us of the nature, origin, and growth of primitive Christianity - - - - - 169

Chap. III.—Special considerations urging to a study of the Bible as a book of venerable authority and as a rule of Faith.

A.—The Bible to be revered as the handmaid of all great modern improvements - - - 184

1. of German, English and Scotch progress as contrasted with Spanish and Italian retrogression - - - - - 184

2. of the English as contrasted with the French Revolution - - - - 188

3. of the charitable and missionary enterprises of the half century - - - 191

On these grounds Scriptural authority is maintainable - - - - - - - - 194

If infallibility be claimed, authority is insecure 194

Too probable course of a student misled by errors in a supposed infallible Book - - 196

Recognition of Scriptural fallibility the student's only safe course - - - - 199

B.—Argument for the authority of Holy Writ from its being equal, at least, to the best excellences of the most civilized Heathen Religion - - - - - - - - 201

C.—Argument for the high authority of Scripture from its having excellences which contrast with the faults even of a Socrates - - - - - - - - 206

D.—Argument for the sacred authority of the Bible from its great and often unique excellences - - - - - - - - 213

Sec. 1.—Is it fair to point to the excellences and not to display the alleged faults of the sacred Volume? - - 213

Sec. 2.—The first characteristic excellence of the Bible is its inculcating the parctice of Eclecticism - - - - - 215

Sec. 3.—Again, the Bible teaches that God is every where energizing - - - 218

Sec. 4.—The Bible emphatically teaches that "God is Love" - - - - 219

Sec. 5.—The Bible teaches in the way of concrete exemplification rather than by the statement of abstract principles - 220

Page

Sec. 6.—The Bible prescribes not the Revolution of outward violence but a silent and sure Reform from within outwards - 224
Sec. 7.—The Bible requires from each man change of mind which shall be effective of change of life - - - - - - 225
Sec. 8.—The consummate knowledge of man and of the world shown by the Bible-writers - - - - - - - 227
Sec. 9.—The Bible teaches the universal Brotherhood of man - - - - - 228
Sec. 10.—The Bible represents man's potentiality of good, as dependent on God indeed, but also as illimitable for all men - 229
Sec. 11.—The Bible handles, with singular wisdom, the difficult subject of Prayer - 231
Sec. 12.—The Bible teaching as regards spiritual Communion with God - - 234
Chap. IV.—Resume and conclusion of this Book claiming a sacred authority for the Bible as a fallible but inspired Volume - - - - - - - 236

BOOK V.

BEARING OF OUR OPINIONS ON CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS AND CHRISTIAN MINISTERS.

Chap. I.—These views not incompatible with intelligent (so-called) Orthodoxy.
Sec. 1.—What, in these remarks, belongs to the clergy applies *a fortiori* to the laity - - 240
Sec. 2.—One, holding our views of Inspiration, may well believe in the Trinity - - - 241
Sec. 3.—To believe the morally contradictory as impossible as to believe the physically contradictory - - - - - - - 243
Chap. II.—General considerations for the ministers of any denomination - - - - - - - - 245
A.—We do not deny the Inspiration of the Bible - - - - - - - - 245
B.—Jesus would not dissent though he differed - - - - - - - - 246
Chap. III.—Special considerations applying to the clergy of the Established Church of England - - - - 250
A.—We are not touched by the Law against Blasphemy - - - - - - - 250
B.—The Act of Uniformity condemns us not 251
C.—In the Book of Common Prayer, neither the Creeds, the Ordinal, the Liturgy, nor the Thirty-nine Articles are opposed to us - 251
Chap. IV—General Recapitulation and Conclusion - - - 262

INTRODUCTION.

SECTION 1.—*Christ the One Foundation, and the Human Mind, with its various Prepossessions, the Groundwork.*

"OTHER foundation can no man lay than that is laid, "which is Jesus Christ;" but the "foundation" itself must rest on the ground, and be surrounded by groundworks. The natural mind of man, and its various learnings and prejudices, are the ground and the groundwork in which gospel truth, or the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, is laid.

The human mind is always generically the same; but its prepossessions are too numerous and too various to be counted. Thus, though there is and can be, in our judgment, only one foundation or chief cornerstone—the adorable Redeemer of all mankind—there are many and various groundworks which may lie under and around that one foundation.

Some of these groundworks are, like sand, lacking in power and solidity to sustain the mighty edifice of Christian sanctification; and so it comes to pass, too frequently, that men who did run well fail in their course and make shipwreck of both faith and goodness.

SECTION 2.—*Reason and Faith in connexion with Religion generally, and with Inspiration particularly.*

THE writer of these pages is fully convinced, that amongst other causes which operate as hindrances to

Christian life, joy, and perseverance, one of the chief is that—if, in this nineteenth century, we are not substituting a Book in the place of the Lord, who is the one and only foundation—we are, many of us at all events, loosening and weakening the ground on which the foundation is to be laid, by such false notions about the Inspiration of the Bible, as tend surely, though in some cases gradually, to overwhelm or overthrow the great temple of the Holy Ghost, which is the Christian man. Thus, if, as is constantly and avowedly done, the mind of man be prepared for receiving the Christian religion by an assertion, that in religion, and especially in the matter of inspiration, Reason and Faith must not be expected to harmonize, but the former must be subject to the latter, then what result is more probable than that Reason, which is the Word (*logos*) of God *within* man, will one day make its mighty voice to be heard in spite of Faith, which, at the best, has only to do with a word of God, *not within* man, but from without?

Section 3.—*The Effect of Confused Notions of Inspiration on the several Classes of Society.*

Accordingly it is daily seen, that, as we base the claims of Christianity on a theory of Inspiration which Faith is taught to grasp independently, of the inherent difficulties or impossibilities against which Reason from the first protests, so Christianity loses its hold on the several classes of our countrymen. One class, the multitudes of our population, without knowing why, cast away the intimate and effective principles of religion which is falsely represented as contrary to common sense, that is, contrary to reason in the masses. Another class, the men of educated and logical rather than religious minds, throw away all Church communion with a system that makes Chris-

tianity contradict science and history, and sometimes even sets the Bible in opposition against morality and religion; and so the Church loses its younger Newman, its Theodore Parker, and countless others, of worth perhaps as great, but names less known. A third class, the educated minds in which logic and piety are both strong, enamoured of their childhood's idea of Inspiration and logically following out that idea or else dreading to cast away, or rather to *lose*, that childhood's notion of Faith as opposed to Reason, leave the more humane and manly brotherhoods of Christianity, and seek a hiding-place, from dread self-contradiction and manifest inconsistency, in that emasculated portion of the Church, where the popular doctrine of Inspiration is secured by being intrenched in the enormous additional ideas of infallible guardianship and infallible interpretation for the Bible; and thus the elder Newman, Ward, Maskell, Wilberforce, and, more than all, Manning, are now—now in this nineteenth century—buried alive in an effete mediævalism.

Three such classes are thus lost to living, thoughtful Church communion. Two other classes remain. There are a few—it seems a very few, but no man can tell how many—who have, in manhood, cast off childhood's dream of Inspiration, and are revelling in the holy joy of a useful, believing life, not according to the letter which killeth, but according to the spirit which giveth life. These men have got away from theories of Inspiration, and the logical consequences of such theories. They are busy—joyfully, thankfully busy—in the work of hallowing themselves in Christ, and striving to hallow others by that blessed name. In the meanwhile, until some unexpected observation or reflection draw forth their latent scepticism, it is well for them; but they have not mastered the subject of Inspiration. They have only, as appears by the absence of all clear teaching and writing on this

topic, abandoned its investigation as alarming and to all appearance hopeless.

The other class, the orthodox commonplace men of stifled doubts or unsuspecting credulity, hold stoutly by their infant teaching. In some things they have become the man; but they have not wholly put away childish things. They are still combating with windmills. They contend against the supposition of Reason's supremacy over Faith, while they assert the right of private judgment which cannot be maintained without the acknowledgment of that very supremacy. They assert that God has, by Inspiration, freed Scripture from all error; and then, the next moment, they cannot fail to see the appearances of error in the Bible, and so they engage themselves in fencing with the Bible's words. Thus a large party of Churchmen have their energies chilled by the inhuman conflict between Reason and Faith; and, from their lists, ever and again, some weary soul is fain to leave "word-fighting," and go to the unbelief which is Deism, or to the credulity which is Roman Catholicism. On all sides it will be found that every party question—and their name is legion—resolves itself into the inquiry, Where is Infallibility? or, which is the same thing, Where is childhood's notion of Inspiration?

We believe that if any man can answer this question, his mind is likely to receive, to sustain, and to build upon the one foundation. We believe that, if any man cannot clearly and intelligibly answer this question, his faith, however orthodox it may be, is in peril every moment; for let him, at any time, discover one of the many flaws in his theory of Inspiration, and all his system is only too likely to fall in ruins with the giving way of this his theological groundwork.

Section 4.—*The General Danger to Faith of such Confusion, a Motive for the undertaking of this Essay in the Interest of Christian Belief.*

Under this conviction, and believing, in all humility, that we see our way clearly to the answer of this all-important question, we have laid down our opinions and their reasons in the following pages.

In the course of our investigation some few of the well-known difficulties and discrepancies of Scripture must be exposed. They will in no case be intentionally treated with anything but the most reverential spirit. The existence of such difficulties is, in no sense, chargeable on us or on any modern writer. Their exposure is neither so full nor so detailed in this volume as in many a work on the Christian evidences. And, indeed, the discrepancies referred to in our pages are, for the most part, so obvious that they can hardly have failed to strike any intelligent youth who has read the Bible twice through, and is ordinarily acquainted with religion. On these considerations we shall hardly be accused, with any justice, of making a display of Biblical difficulties.

Section 5.—*The Author's Experience of Benefit from the Views about to be Propounded.*

The views and opinions we are about to advance and vindicate are often summarily condemned as "infidelity." As a demurrer against this condemnation, and as an encouragement to those who may be already perplexed by a partial or superficial examination of the doctrine of Inspiration, the writer takes this opportunity of avowing that he himself has, in times past, tried to hold and to uphold the theory which is commonly known as that of verbal inspira-

tion. He has tried this, and various modifications of this. He at one time believed—in common with the majority of his contemporaries—that to abandon the infallibility of Scripture was the same as abandoning its inspiration; and that such an abandonment was inconsistent with the vows of a clergyman, if not with the faith of a Christian. Under this conviction he clung, like a drowning man, to the high doctrine of Inspiration: but ever and again he was tortured by the consciousness that his creed and his knowledge were out of harmony. For years he has been examining and reflecting on this subject of Inspiration. At last—many months since—circumstances induced him to commit his thoughts and the result of his reading to paper; and then it was that he discovered the clue by which, for himself at all events, this mystery was to be unravelled. The following pages are a result of that discovery, and the author has thus no hesitation in avowing, that he has been obliged to think out for himself the course of thought unfolded in this book—that, in the process of his reading and reflecting, he has sometimes been on the point of abandoning the Christian faith and his clerical position—but that now, having passed through his fiery ordeal, whose dread trials none should despise that have not known them, his Christian belief and his professional and conscientious tranquillity are perfectly undisturbed.

Thus, let any man faithfully, candidly, patiently go through this inquiry concerning Inspiration, and the writer is sanguine in the hope that faith, instead of being overthrown, will be restored and confirmed; inasmuch as those props of it which were irreconcilable with Reason, will have been got rid of, and Faith and Reason will have been brought into harmonious action for the upholding of Christian truth.

Section 6.—*Several common Epithets of Inspiration not employed in these pages.*

It will be observed by the reader, that the ordinary epithets by which "Plenary" Inspiration is distinguished from "Verbal," and "Mechanical" from "Dynamical," are not employed in any part of this Essay. Full, or "plenary" Inspiration, whether of a book or a writer, we regard as necessarily synonymous with "verbal" Inspiration; for we know no means, except by the names of things (or words), whereby thoughts can be quickened in the mind, or recorded in a book.* As to the difference between "mechanical" and "Dynamical," it is broad enough. If a flute (for example), or one of Mr. Babbage's machines, or a dead man, or a man to whom the spirit was *not* subject, were said to be inspired, that would be "mechanical" inspiration indeed: but if a living man, without the destruction of his individual characteristics, be, "moved by the Spirit," it can, assuredly, only be by a strengthening or enlarging, or adding to the number of the faculties of that living man—that is, by "dynamical" inspiration.

But, after all, we know not what practical good is attained when we are supposed to have ascertained that the *infallible* effect of Inspiration is produced on the general contents of the Bible (which is what we presume is meant by the advocates of plenary Inspiration), or on its every word, as is maintained by the upholders of verbal Inspiration. Or, yet again, we

* The writer has re-perused Mr. Maurice's admirable Essay on Inspiration since these words were written; and it is to him a source of much satisfaction to find that his estimate of the value of these epithets, "verbal" and "plenary," coincides with the opinion of Mr. Maurice. Indeed, if it were not for fear of involving that reverend and useful author in any blame which may attach to these pages, the writer would fain express his belief that the opinions set forth in this volume are, to a great extent, in accord with Mr. Maurice's views, as only too briefly stated in the well-known "Theological Essays."

are at a loss to imagine what great practical good accrues to us when, as an ultimate result of our examining the subject of Inspiration, we are supposed to acknowledge the manifest truth, that the Spirit operates on man as a rational being (dynamically), and not on man as a mere machine (mechanically). On such considerations we have abstained from the use of these epithets, just as we also leave unemployed the fantastic distinctions between the inspiration "of suggestion" and that "of superintendence."

Section 7.—*The Confirming of Faith, the Removing Unbelief, and the Promotion of Charity, are the objects of this Essay.*

It has been already said that the confirming of men in an intelligent and reasonable faith is one object at which we aim in publishing this Essay. A kindred object, which, it is believed, our pages will tend to effect, has been thus quaintly but graphically described by a great writer on the doctrine of Inspiration. Leclerc's words are:—"One consequence of our prin-
"ciples is, that hereby at one blow will be solved an
"infinite number of difficulties, which Libertines" (*i.e.*, Freethinkers) "are wont to allege against the Holy
"Scripture, and which it is not possible to solve by
"the ordinary principles. Their mouths will be stop-
"ped, and it will no longer avail them to object
"against Christians the contradictions which are found
"in the Scriptures; the lowness of the style of the
"sacred writers; the little order observed to be in
"many of their discourses; and whatever else they
"have been used to say against our divines, who have
"in vain puzzled themselves to answer them. By im-
"posing nothing upon these men as necessary to be
"believed, but the Truth of what is most essential in
"the Histories of the Old and New Testament, and

"the Divinity of Our Saviour's Doctrine (in which "there is nothing that is not conformable to right "Reason), they will be brought to acknowledge that "Christian Religion is really descended from Heaven; "and will be easily inclined to embrace that which "hitherto they have obstinately rejected, because it "was grounded on suppositions repugnant to that light "of Reason by which they were guided."

Thus the writer hopes his work will, with the Divine blessing, be a means of converting the unbeliever, as well as of confirming the believer.

Another object we have in view is the increasing of charity among all Christians, who will observe and reflect that those verities, which we are apt to regard as dogmatic certainties, are, after all, just matters of belief, based respectively on more or less rational and firmly-established human opinions. Obviously, if any men may attain to the infinite so far as to *know* an infallible oracle or guide, it is right that they, who are so infallibly enlightened, should dictate to their fallible brethren; and hence arises uncharitableness, naturally enough, out of the supposed infallibility of knowledge possessed by some men. But if, on the other hand, we all can only know in part, and not infallibly, then we should all be very humble and very patient in the prosecution of knowledge for ourselves, and in the endeavour to impart to others what we think we know. Hence humility and charity should, and to a certain extent will, arise naturally from the consciousness that God alone is to be conceived of as infallible, and that all we and ours are more or less fallible.

Thus, then, it is hoped that our Essay will be a means, however small, for the lessening of unbelief, and for the augmenting of faith and charity: and assuredly, in proportion as we may succeed in these points, so will there be hope that we shall be advancing true and godly obedience to Christ and practice of His religion, which are so essential to human happi-

ness, and which yet are so apt to be forgotten or neglected in the heat of controversy, where strong assertion and subtle argumentation must too frequently make up for the deficiency of light which Reason and Truth can throw on either side of the questions from time to time discussed.

Section 8.—*The Arrangement of the Work in Five Books.*

The mode in which we shall carry on our inquiry will be by asking first—Does the Bible permit us to regard its teaching as infallible? This will be the subject of our First Book. The Second Book will furnish an answer to the question—What reason have we for expecting the Bible to be infallible? Our next point, in the Third Book, will be to ascertain the true meaning of the term "Inspiration." The Fourth Book will be occupied with an endeavour to vindicate the just authority of Holy Writ. And our Concluding Book will be an endeavour to show the bearing of the preceding pages on Christian believers and Christian ministers.

Section 9.—*Acknowledged Sources whence the Materials of this Essay have been drawn.*

In these introductory remarks, it only remains that the author should make his acknowledgments as to the sources whence his opinions are drawn. For the materials the writer lays no claim to originality; nor yet can he say that he has merely complied them from other books. He has read Hinds, Morell, Henderson, Gaussen, Lee, and many other works, on the subject of Inspiration: he has read some of the publications

of Francis Newman, Froude, Theodore Parker, and others of a like school: he has read, and largely profited by, Leclerc's Five Letters on Inspiration, and Coleridge's "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit." These, and many other works bearing more or less directly on the subject, he has read and tried to learn from. Some have suggested truth; others have, intentionally or unintentionally, warned against fallacies; all and each have contributed some light, and to all and each the author's thanks are cordially given. Professor Tholuck is named twice in the ensuing pages; and to his articles on "Inspirationslehre" the writer is especially indebted. But, after all, a careful perusal of the Bible itself, and much painful, but ultimately happy and truly remunerative reflection, have chiefly led the Essayist to the views now set forth by him.

In the materials of this book it is believed that there is nothing new. That which the writer believes to be novel, and that, consequently, which induces him to ask from the public a perusal of his book, is the combination of a tolerable freedom from bias; a fearless following of premises to their conclusions; and, after free inquiry, the candid avowal of those modified but distinct opinions regarding Inspiration which still remain in the mind of a believer and a clergyman. This combination, and the results to which it has led, the author believes to be both novel and important; and therefore he sends his book to the printer.

Section 10.—*The Solemnity of the present Inquiry fully Recognised.*

A careful judgment of the serious matters, not lightly or impiously handled in these pages, is asked from the reader. It is feared that there may be some

errors in the particulars of the Essay ; but, as to the general soundness of the argument, the author entertains no doubt whatever ; and he has, therefore, no hesitation in introducing his work to public notice, with the devout supplication that God—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—may bless this inquiry, to the relief of many doubting minds, to the confirmation of every reader's heavenly confidence, and to the general extension of the kingdom of Christ. May the author not write, nor the reader think, aught that would be untrue, ungodly, or uncharitable!

BOOK I.

DOES THE BIBLE PERMIT US TO REGARD ITS TEACHING AS INFALLIBLE?

CHAPTER I.

THE INSPIRED BOOK, AND ITS SUPPOSED INFALLIBILITY.

SECTION 1.—*Importance of ascertaining the Meaning of Inspiration as a Characteristic of Holy Writ.*

WHEN a volume is placed in our hands with the solemn and very important information that this Holy Book is the Inspired Word of God, and with the further assurance that all its contents are the whole extant Scriptures which have been given by inspiration of God, the question naturally arises in our mind, what is the meaning of the verb "inspire," whose derivatives, the participial adjective "inspired," and the noun "inspiration," are used with such apparent force in these religious assertions?

The verb and its derivatives are by no means uncommon in expressions which, at first sight, seem to have little or no connexion with religion. Thus we hear of one man being inspired by patriotism, another by awe, and a third by music, and the "inspiration of poetry" is by no means a rare phrase.

Let us not, however, be misled by a premature inquiry into the so-called secular or profane meaning of these terms ; but let our first inquiry be as to their signification when they occur in religious applications.

Section 2.—*No Definition to be found, ready to hand, in Scripture.*

The "Inspiration" of Scripture! What is meant by this use of the word? Ultimately we shall endeavour to frame a definition of this term by examining the several meanings which it bears in the usage of the sacred penmen : but, in the meanwhile, if we seek for a logical answer to our question, it will not be found in Holy Writ, at least not in the form of a definition ; for the Bible is written throughout in popular, familiar phraseology, and not in the way of any philosophical system. One may find many rich and imaginative descriptions in the Bible but not a single logical or scientific definition. Thus, if we adopt an accurate and idiomatic translation of a passage in Paul's second letter to Timothy, we may obtain a graphic and impressive account of the usefulness of Inspiration in the words, "Every divinely inspired "writing" (besides the sanctity which attaches to it as originating with God) "is also profitable for instruc-"tion, for reproof, for correction, for education in "righteousness, in order that the man of God may be "thoroughly fitted for every good work." This is an exquisitely fine description of the uses of an inspired writing ; but the passage manifestly fails to tell us what is the precise meaning of divine inspiration, and so fails to be a definition.

SECTION 3.—*Definitions of "Inspiration" in the Dictionaries of Johnson, Richardson, Robinson, Eden, and Webster.*

IF, then, in the absence of any Scriptural definition, we desire to ascertain the signification of this term, as it is employed in our own language with reference to the Bible, the most natural method will be to consult a good English dictionary. Upon doing this, the great Johnson tells us that, in a religious sense, "inspiration" means "the infusion of ideas into the mind by a "superior power;" and he quotes from Dr. Watts a fuller statement of this definition, regarded from the Christian stand-point: "Inspiration is when an over-"powering impression of any proposition is made "upon the mind by God himself, that gives a convincing "and indubitable evidence of the truth and divinity of "it: so were the prophets and apostles *inspired*." Such was Dr. Johnson's definition and illustration of our word. To the same effect, Dr. Richardson in his truly scholarlike English Dictionary, tells us that the meaning of the verb "inspire," in its religious acceptation, is "to give, grant, or bestow, the *Spirit*; "(metaphorically) to infuse the *Spirit*; to actuate, "guide, or direct by the *Spirit*: to animate."

On looking to another class of dictionaries, which are either written in the religious interest of parties, or are concerned with the modern and now popular meaning of terms, rather than with their old English usage like Dr. Richardson, or their derivative signification like Johnson, we find Dr. Robinson, in his Theological Dictionary,* defining Inspiration as "the "conveying of certain extraordinary and supernatural "notices and motions to the soul," in such a manner that "every inspired writing is free from error, that "is, from material error." Mr. Eden, in his well-known

* Publisher, Longman & Co., London, 1815.

Churchman's Theological Dictionary,* defines "Inspiration" as "the *breathing into* the soul of man, by "the Holy Ghost, of certain supernatural ideas or "emotions;" and he goes on to say that, although there have been different opinions as to whether the inspiration of Scripture is plenary or limited, the meaning of the word, with reference to the Bible, is "the *divine* "*dictation* of truth to the minds of the sacred writers, "whereby they were not only preserved from error, "but specifically instructed to communicate certain "truths which God would make known to man." Similarly, Dr. Webster, in his Dictionary of the English Language, defines Inspiration, when spoken of the Scripture writers, as "the supernatural influence "of the Spirit of God on the human mind, by which "prophets, apostles, and sacred writers, were qualified "to set forth divine truth without any mixture of "error."

Now, the careful observer of these two classes of definitions cannot fail to notice that—whichever of the parties may be the more correct in the sense they attach to the word with which we are interested—whichever party, Jonhson and Richardson, or Robinson, Eden, and Webster, may be the more in accordance with truth or antiquity—there is a notable difference between their two classes of difinition; inasmuch as the one party put prominently forward the idea, that protection from all error (or, in one word, infallibility) is an essential element in the meaning of the term Inspiration as applied to Scripture; whereas Johnson and Richardson wholly omit to notice any such idea as being contained in the word. We are far from implying that infallibity was never included in the ideas connoted, as logicians would say, by the term Inspiration, until after Johnson's time. The Homilies and vast masses of earlier literature show the contrary. But we point to this omission of infallibility from the definition of In-

* Published by J. W. Parker, London, 1845.

spiration given in two of our best dictionaries as noteworthy; and we ask, which class of the definitions is the best representative of our modern popular religious opinion?

Section 4.—*The Signification popularly attached to "Inspiration."*

In answering this question we shall not weary the reader with quotations from the numerous modern treatises on Inspiration; but we may refer to the manner in which the Bible, as the inspired Word of God, is constantly used in the pulpit and even in conversation, and in the compositions of some among our best speakers and writers. However abstruse the mooted points of philosophy may be—however there may be a large weight of probabilities preponderating against a conclusion—however surrounded by difficulties that conclusion may be; yet, if only the speaker or the writer can bring a single passage of Scripture to bear against his adversary's position, and in favor of his own, he knows that his point is gained. He will have carried conviction to the minds of most of his hearers; and, if he be a religious man, he will in all probability believe that there is no further room for doubt: his mind, like that of his audience, has parodied and adopted the ancient and tyrannical watchword of the Church—The Bible, has spoken, and the case is settled.

What can support this practice of proving the improbable, by a text, except the general belief that every verse and every word in the Bible are infallible? If, in an argument, we should rely solely on a quotation from Locke, or Aristotle, or Cicero, or the Institutes of Justinian, we should be required to prove that the alleged dictum of these or any other wise but fallible men, was an instance in which they wrote wisely, and was not one of the numerous errors into which all men

have fallen. But it is not so in quoting Scripture. Make it appear that a text applies to your case, and that one text will save you all further trouble ; because your adversary and your audience are not prepared to avow that they doubt the infallibity of the inspired volume. This state of things is too notorious to require further argument. Rightly or wrongly, the popular mind regards infallibility as a conspicuous and essential element in the idea of Inspiration.

Section 5.—*The Duty of promulgating Clear Views on this Subject.*

Now, we believe Inspiration, and especially the Inspiration of the Bible, to be so holy and so true a thing, that we are most anxious to state for others as clearly as, by God's help, we have been able to ascertain for ourselves, what is the real and uncorrupted meaning of this very important term ; which though of so common occurrence, is yet, as we humbly think, a term but little understood and grievously misinterpreted.

We have already seen that the ordinary belief of Englishmen connects infallibility with Scriptural inspiration. If this belief be well founded, it is evident that the Bible, as an inspired volume, ought to be infallible. If the Bible be not infallible, and if yet it be, as we believe it is, divinely inspired, then evidently infallibility can form no essential part of the true idea of inspiration. To the examination of the question, then, Does the Bible permit us to regard its teaching as infallible? the remaining part of this Book will be devoted. We shall discuss this question carefully and candidly. There will be parts of our argument that can hardly fail to surprise, and, we fear, to grieve the majority of our readers ; but still, truth, and, above all, truth in religious matters, though it should be spoken in love, must not be suppressed for fear of

man's displeasure or in order to avoid giving salutary pain. If we see important truth clearly, which we conscientiously believe our neighbors either do not see at all, or see so dimly that they lose the benefit that ensues from the living energy of truth clearly understood and felt, it is our bounden duty—as men and Christians, not to say as ministers of God—to tell forth plainly and boldly that which has done us good, and made us happier followers of the crucified and risen One.

It is under the persuasion that we see, and can help in showing others, most blessed and profitable Christian truth respecting the Inspiration of Holy Writ, that we have undertaken, and will unhesitatingly carry through our present inquiry—Does the Bible permit us to regard its teaching as infallible—that is, as being free from all error?

Section 6.—*The precise Meaning of the term Infallible.*

Let us be distinct as to the employment of this word "infallible." We do not use the term captiously or overstrainedly. We shall not call the Bible fallible because it contains a correct statement of the errors of men whom it represents as fallible; or a true record of the evil designs which were in the minds of wicked spirits, human or superhuman; though we cannot refrain from remarking here, that the observation of this truth should make those readers very careful, who are accustomed to quote Bible words as settling any question, lest they should use the words of Satan, or some evil spirit or wicked man, and think that they are using the words of the Most High. It is in no narrow sense like this that we shall ask whether Inspiration has made the Bible infallible. But, on the other hand, we use this term "infallible" in no lax

and trifling sense. We use it—indeed, we have already used it—and we have shown that lexicographers and the people use it, definitely and precisely as equivalent to "free from all error," having no admixture of error. This is the popular acceptation of the word; and this is, necessarily, the only meaning that the word can admit of: for if you say of man that he is fallible, you mean that he is liable to one or more errors; but if you say of man that he is infallible, you mean that he is not fallible, or not liable to any single error. This universality of meaning is inseparable from every negative term like that which we are now considering. Thus, it would be incorrect and untrue to say of a man who had once, and only once, been worsted in battle, that he was *invincible;* or to say of a man who had committed one, and only one, sin, that he was *impeccable;* or to say of a man who had even once acted unjustly for a bribe, that he was *incorruptible.* Similarly, if a book consisting of a million pages had in it only one single error, you might say of that book that it was wonderfully free from errors, or amazingly correct; but it would be an improper and inadmissible use of language, to say that it was infallible, or wholly free from error. Such is, unquestionably, the true meaning of this term.

In dealing with Scripture, however, we shall rest our allegation on no solitary passage, but on a tolerably broad collection of passages: only it is well that we should understand, at the outset, that there may be such a comparison as more or less fallible; but there can rightly be no such comparison as more or less infallible. A thing must be either wholly free from error, and then it is infallible; or it must be marked by one or more errors, and then it is fallible. Our present question then, is—Does the Bible permit us to believe that its teaching is infallible? that is, that in all which it states without disapprobation there is no error whatever?

CHAPTER II.

SCIENTIFIC AND HISTORICAL ERRORS OBSERVABLE IN HOLY WRIT.

And now to our task. As did the noble Bereans of old, so let as search the Scriptures, to see if these things, which are told us about the infallibility that is in the Bible, because of its Inspiration, be really so.

Section 1.—*Our Investigation will not turn on the Bearing of Modern Science on the Theories of the Scripture-writers.*

We are not about to lay the chief stress of our argument on the fact, that geology contradicts the account of creation's history as given in Genesis. The establishing of our conclusions will not depend on the fact, that astronomy forbids our believing the earth to be surrounded by a transparent but solid case, (called "rakia"* in the Hebrew, "stereoma" in the Septuagint, "*firm*-ament" in the English,) in which the Sun and Moon and Stars are "set," by which the waters above the firmament are separated from the waters under the firmament, and in which there are windows by whose opening the world was once deluged. We shall not rest our argument on the truth, that geography is sorely puzzled to comprehend how

* Vid. Gesenius' Heb. Lexicon.

a deluge, which is supposed to have transformed the whole face of our planet, so that its old ocean beds became its mountain tops, can have left the well-known river Euphrates to flow on in its accustomed course, as it had done in the days of Adam and of Paradise. Nor is it because there is no mechanical or physical ingenuity which can make the apparently non-miraculous* history of the Ark, containing its alleged inhabitants, possible, that we shall be prepared to avow our belief that the Bible does not permit us to regard its teaching as infallible. We shall not attempt to obtain an answer to our question out of these and numerous similar discrepancies between science and Scripture; because it might be said that science is as yet only in its infancy, and we therefore know not what its ultimate decisions may be. Besides, we ourselves, and the majority of our readers, would not be competent judges of the scientific principles involved in such a comparison of the Bible with the ascertained facts and laws of nature. The course of our investigation will be far simpler, and will be such that any attentive reader of the most ordinary intelligence can understand it, and can hardly fail in forming a right judgment of the case. Our references will be chiefly to the New Testament, where the history is tolerably familiar to every reader, and where the original language (the Greek) is known by multitudes. In comparatively few cases, and those sufficiently strong and intelligible, shall we have occasion to refer to the less familiar pages of the Old Testament, in which the original language is known to very few scholars, and well-known to hardly any on account of the paucity

* We apply the epithet "non-miraculous," of course, not to the whole history of the Noachic deluge, but simply to the one portion of it in which the narrator shows no sign of surprise while he informs us that duplicate specimens of all the terrestrial animals and their provisions were, during many months, accommodated in a roofed vessel 300 cubits (450 feet) long, 50 cubits (75 feet) broad, and 30 cubits (45 feet) high. The ventilation was provided for by one window, and that, apparently, a cubit, or eighteen inches square!

of extant Hebrew books* wherein to observe the usages of many important Old Testament words.

Section 2.—*The Genealogies of our Lord.*

A.—Matthew's Account of the Genealogy of Jesus.

On opening the New Testament, we are met on the first page by the assertion that "all the generations "from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, and "from David until the carrying away into Babylon are "fourteen generations, and from the carrying away into "Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations."

Now, let us not be told, by those who wish to uphold the doctrine of the Bible's freedom from all error, that a Scripture genealogy is but a small and insignificant matter with which to occupy the reader's time and attention: for thus to speak of a genealogy would surely be not only to abandon the infallibility, but even to question the wisdom of those sacred penmen who often fill up whole pages of their compositions with Hebrew pedigrees; and who, in some instances, have repeated more than once pedigrees which, as they profess to be of one and the same person, and traced through the same line, should be, what indeed they sometimes are not, identical.

If, then, we compare Matthew's assertion, quoted above, with the genealogy of Jesus as given by Matthew himself, the case stands thus:—

* By "Hebrew books" we do not refer to Rabbinical literature, of which there is an abundance; but we refer to the small number of books written in the idiom and dialect of the Old Testament writers. How little we should know of Greek if the only extant works in that language were Æschylus, Sophocles, Xenophon, and Thucydides, with a vast mass of the corrupt Romaic or modern Greek! Yet such is a not unfair measure of all we know of the Old Testament language.

1. Abram.	1. Solomon.		1. Salathiel.
2. Isaac.	2. Roboam.		2. Zorobabel.
3. Jacob.	3. Abia.		3. Abiud.
4. Judas.	4. Asa.		4. Eliakim.
5. Phares.	5. Josaphat.		5. Azor.
6. Esrom.	6. Joram.	1. Ahaziah.	6. Sadoc.
7. Aram.	7. Ozias.	2. Joash.	7. Achim.
8. Aminidab.	8. Joatham.	3. Amaziah.	8. Eliud.
9. Naasson.	9. Achaz.		9. Eleazar.
10. Salmon.	10. Ezekias.		10. Matthan.
11. Booz.	11. Manasses.		11. Jacob.
12. Obed.	12. Amon.		12. Joseph.
13. Jesse.	13. Josias.		13. Jesus.
14. David.	14. Jechonias.		14.

Obviously, in this last column, where Matthew says there should be fourteen generations, there are only thirteen. Every man will say there is some mistake. Is the mistake in our recounting of the names? Let the reader compare these pages with his Bible. If we alter our mode of counting, and place Jechonias at the head of the third column as well as at the bottom of the second, then we must similarly place David at the head of the second column as well as at the bottom of the first; and thus we shall vary the incorrectness, by producing fourteen generations in the third column, and fifteen instead of fourteen, as Matthew says, in the second.

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1. *What if Errors in Transcription be acknowledged?*

Here, however, we may be met by the supposition that, in the course of frequent transcriptions, the manuscripts may have been marred and so one name may have been lost from what should be the third column of fourteen generations. Such a slight corruption of the manuscripts and such an omission is, we think, a most reasonable mode of accounting for this discrepancy; but then, let it be at once fairly stated, that if obvious errors are to be acknowledged as being in Scripture, and their existence is to be accounted for by supposing

that the manuscripts have been corrupted, this is to admit that, whether there ever was or was not such a thing as an infallibly-inspired Bible, we at all events have no such book at the present day; and therefore we cannot tell how nearly the same as, or how widely different from, the imaginary infallible original our modern Scriptures may be.

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2. *The particular Version of the Bible with which our Inquiry is concerned.*

The subject of corrupted manuscripts, however, suggests the necessity of our settling what edition, version, or translation of the Bible it is with reference to which we are asking and trying to answer the question, Does the Bible permit us to believe its teaching infallible, or free from all error?

This, surely, cannot be a difficult matter. For the purposes of our argument it is indifferent which edition or translation might be adopted; but some one Bible must be chosen, or we may be told that there is somewhere a various reading of any passage concerning which we may be arguing. We believe that every point we shall advance in this chapter might be maintained with reference to any published edition or translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, or the Greek New Testament; but since it is *desirable* in *any* argument, and *necessary* in one that professes to address itself to the populace, to be perfectly definite in the use of terms, let us say of what Bible we now treat. When an English preacher clinches an argument by a text which he and his audience consider unanswerable because it is drawn from an infallible book, from what Bible is it that he quotes? Or when, in popular language, we speak of the inspired and infallible Word of God, to what book is it that we allude? Not, surely, to a volume which we have never seen, or which may have

been lost centuries ago. If the book in the preacher's hand be not itself an infallible authority—if it be only a fallible copy of some lost and possibly never-existent infallible original—are we wise in submitting our reason to its dogma? Nay, more, has the preacher any right to bind his fellow-creatures with its perhaps only human and erroneous precepts? How do we know, if the book in the preacher's hand be confessed as only a fallible copy of a supposed lost infallible original, that the very verse which has just been quoted, as finally and authoritatively deciding some important religious question, be not itself one of the instances in which the fallible copy erroneously differs from the true autograph?

This is a point which might, if it were necessary, be so worked out as by itself to show the impossibility of ascertaining which is the infallible reading; and, of the infallible reading, which is the true translation; and, so, the impossibility of proving any modern Bible to be infallible: but the question now is merely to what book do intelligent Englishmen refer when they speak of the infallible Word of God? and to this question the answer clearly is, the English authorized version subject to a few corrections in its translation. Our problem is concerned with the alleged infallibility of this inspired volume. We have already noticed one obvious inaccuracy in Matthew's genealogy as it is given in this Bible. Another observable point in the same genealogy is shown in our tabulated view of it. Matthew tells us that Joram begat Ozias; whereas the books of Chronicles and Kings tell us that Ozias was the great-great-grand-son of Joram, and that between these two kings there intervened three additional links in the chain of Jesu's ancestry. The common Jewish mode of speaking of any ancestor, however remote, as a father, might remove this difficulty if Matthew had not been at the pains to state, that "*all* the generations," from David till the captivity were "fourteen generations." Here

then, is another discrepancy in the history of the New Testament which looks like an error.

It is not a little curious, and important as illustrating our subject, that, according to the book of Chronicles (2 Chron. xxi. 20, xxii. 1, 2), Ahaziah, the *youngest* son of King Jehoram, was two years older than his father; for Jehoram died aged forty years, and upon his decease, Ahaziah, aged forty-two years, began to reign.*

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3. *Unsatisfactoriness of all Modes of Explaining away Difficulties.*

We know that there are modes of *explaining away* these and all other discrepancies; but we feel that they are so thoroughly unsatisfactory—not to use a stronger word—that, though they may serve as a hiding-place for the doubts of those whose conclusions as to Biblical infallibility are foregone, yet they are a terrible stumbling-block to those who bring earnest, unprejudiced minds to the examination of Scripture.

B.—Luke's Account of the Genealogy of Jesus compared with that of Matthew.

But, yet again, before we quit the genealogy of Jesus, it should be noticed that Matthew is not the only evangelist who furnishes us with the ancestral line of "Joseph the husband of Mary." Luke supplies another genealogy of this same "Joseph," who was the reputed father of Jesus. We have already given Matthew's genealogy. That of Luke is quite worthy

* Doubtless, the means for correcting this error are contained in 2 Kings viii. 26; but this, of course, does not disprove the existence of a palpable error in the scriptural book of Chronicles.

of being compared with it, as may be seen in the following table :—

1. Abraham.	15. Nathan.	29. Er.	43. Maath.
2. Isaac.	16. Mattatha.	30. Elmodam.	44. Nagge.
3. Jacob.	17. Menan.	31. Cosam.	45. Esli.
4. Juda.	18 Melea,	32. Addi.	46. Naum.
5. Phares.	19 Eliakim.	33. Melchi.	47. Amos.
6. Esrom.	20. Jonan.	34 Neri.	48. Mattathias.
7. Aram.	21. Joseph.	35. Salathiel.	49. Joseph.
8. Aminadab.	22. Juda.	36. Zorobabel.	50. Janna.
9 Naasson.	23. Simeon.	37. Rhesa.	51. Melchi.
10. Salmon.	24. Levi	38. Joanna.	52. Levi.
11. Boez.	25 Matthat.	39. Juda.	53. Matthat.
12. Obed.	26. Jorim	40. Joseph.	54. Heli.
13 Jesse.	27. Eliezer.	41. Semei.	55. Joseph.
14. David.	28. Jose.	42. Mattathias.	56. Jesus.

On the first glance, these genealogies, as given by Matthew and Luke, are so evidently different, that it has been the ordinary—if not the invariable—practice of Christian harmonists and commentators to represent the former evangelist as recording the descent of Joseph, whom the Jews would recognise as the father of Jesus ; while the latter evangelist is said to have given the pedigree of Mary, whom alone the Gentiles would acknowledge as being the only earthly parent of our Saviour.

We will say nothing of the plausibility of this explanation, which acknowledges the genealogies to be wholly different, and *supposes* they belong to two persons. Our question must rather affect the truthfulness of this mode of explaining away the difficulty. Let the reader bear in mind how Matthew states that "Jacob "begat *Joseph*, the husband of Mary ;" and how Luke's words are, "*Joseph*, which was the son of Heli," and then let any reader say whether it is truthful to allege that these different genealogies belong to different individuals. Is it not plain that each of them professes to trace the lineal descent of one and the same man, Joseph ? If we are still to be told, that when Matthew professes to give the descent of Joseph he is to be un-

derstood as giving the descent of Mary, then we simply rejoin that such an explanation is nothing more or less than an abandonment of the idea of Inspirational Infallibility ; for it represents the Bible as saying one thing and meaning another.

Thus, then, either Inspirational Infallibility must be given up at once, or these two genealogies must both be regarded as tracing the descent of one and the same man, Joseph, "the husband of Mary, the father," as was supposed, "of Jesus."

On this latter supposition it is remarkable to find fifty-five links between Abraham and Joseph in Luke's narrative, and only forty in that of Matthew. It is remarkable to observe, that we must suppose Joseph's father to have had two names, Heli and Jacob ; and that Matthew and Luke have not only employed his different names to designate him, but we must likewise suppose that, with the exception of Salathiel and Zorobabel, all Joseph's forefathers up to the time of David had each two names, and that each evangelist has used a different name for every ancestor of Joseph between himself and David the king, except in the cases of Salathiel and Zorobabel. Indeed, it is still more remarkable that, when we come to the time of David, it is manifest that, at least in their allusion to that king's sons, the evangelists are not using two names for the same individual : but Luke traces down the line of Joseph through one son of David, Nathan ;* and Matthew through another, Solomon. All this looks very much as if either Matthew or Luke, or both, had made some mistake about these very diverse-looking genealogies of one man : and if we found such a state of things in any book, except the Bible, we should at once pass it by as an unimportant error. In a book, however, which is said to be infallible, or wholly free

*2 Sam. v. 14: "These be the names of those that were born unto David in Jerusalem ; Shammuah, and Shobab, and *Nathan*, and *Solomon*, &c.

from error, there can be no such thing as an unimportant error; for a single mistake destroys all claim to infallibility, though it is far from affecting the credibility, or believableness of the document in which it occurs. Thus we pass from these genealogies with our judgment not favourably affected in behalf of Inspirational Infallibility.

Section 3.—*The Residence of the Holy Family.*

The next point we shall notice is the residence assigned to the family of Joseph at the time of Our Saviour's birth. Generally, Matthew represents Bethlehem as the home of Joseph and Mary, and Nazareth as a retreat to which they were driven by the cruelty of Herod and Archelaus: whereas Luke represents Nazareth as the home, and Bethlehem as the temporary and very inconvenient abode, of the holy family. But if we look more closely into detail, Luke informs us that, when Jesus was forty days old, he was taken from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, and there, in the temple, as well as among "all them that looked for redemption in "Jerusalem," his praise was sung and celebrated by Simeon and Anna just as, even prior to this, the shepherds had "made known abroad the saying which was "told them concerning this child." But Luke goes on to tell us that, after this glorious visit to Jerusalem—forty days after the Virgin had given birth to our Lord—Joseph and his wife and her child "returned to Gali-"lee, to their own city Nazareth;" and Jesu's "parents "went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the pass-"over." According to Luke's narrative, "the child "grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom "and the grace of God was upon him;" but nothing which was known to Luke, and which he deemed particularly note-worthy, transpired till the well-known visit to Jerusalem, when Jesus was twelve years old.

Now, let the reader compare this narrative with that which is given by Matthew. "When Jesus was born "in Bethlehem," magi from the east were led to him and his mother by "his star." "Then Herod," not having been told apparently of the fame which the shepherds and Simeon and Anna were giving Jesus far and wide among the Jewish multitudes who expected Messianic redemption, ascertains from these magi, and from the chief priests and scribes, the probable place of Messiah's birth, and the utmost range of time within which the wondrous child must have been born, according to their observation of "his star." Matthew does not tell us how long the cruel Herod waited in expectation of the magi bringing him certain intelligence of Messiah's abode: but he tells us that, before the monarch discovered that the magi were not coming to give him the information he so much desired—before Herod executed his dreadful massacre of all infants in Bethlehem and its neighbourhood, "from two years old "and under"—Joseph, in obedience to a dream, removed "the young child and his mother by night, and "departed into Egypt," whence he did not return till Herod was dead; and "when he heard that Archelaus "did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, "he was afraid to go thither; notwithstanding, being "warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the "parts of Galilee, and he came and dwelt in a city "called Nazareth."

In comparing these histories we will not dwell upon the belief in astrology which is mixed up with Matthew's narrative; nor will we deny that there are ingenious, though, as we think, most improbable and unsatisfactory, modes of reconciling the two accounts of our Saviour's infancy: but we would merely point to the discrepancy of Herod being at a loss to know the when and the where of Jesu's birth and residence, while in the very temple among the priests, as well as generally throughout Jerusalem, Anna was making Jesus famous as the Messiah: and, again, the difference should

be observed between the regular annual visits to Jerusalem, of which Luke tells us, and the dread of Judæa, while Herod and Archelaus were governors there, of which we read in Matthew : and yet, once more, when did the magi visit Jesus at Bethlehem? Was it within the first forty days of his human life? If so, how did his parents venture to take him to the temple in Jerusalem, near the very fangs of the bloodthirsty Herod? or, how does Matthew represent Joseph as having immediately, in the very night of the dream, set out with the young child for Egypt? But, on the other hand, if the magi came after the forty days were past, and after the Virgin's legal purification had been accomplished, how does it happen that they found Jesus still at Bethlehem, when Luke tells us he was gone to dwell at Nazareth? And if it should be supposed that, after dwelling for a time at Nazareth, the holy family were visited by the magi at Bethlehem, on some occasion when they had come up (to a place eight miles from Jerusalem) to keep the passover—if this supposition be advanced—how can it be reconciled with the marks of time by which Matthew denotes the period of the magian adoration, and which are given in our translation, in the words, "now, *when* Jesus was born "in Bethlehem," &c., and which may be rendered, less idiomatically, but with greater verbal exactness, "But "Jesus having been born in Bethlehem of Judæa, in "the days of Herod the king, behold magi from the "east were present at Jerusalem, saying, Where is the "king of the Jews that has been born?" (i. e. *just recently* born.)

Thus, on each of these three suppositions, and on every other that we have seen or can conceive, there arises some serious and manifest discrepancy between the narratives of these two evangelists.

SECTION 4.—*The supposed Prophecy, "He shall be called a Nazarene."*

BUT now let us consider for a moment the settlement at Nazareth which both the evangelists represent the holy family as having ultimately made. Matthew says this abode at Nazareth was effected under divine guidance, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken "by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." This is a remarkable passage, for none of the prophets do foretell that the Messiah shall be called a Nazarene, so that on this point Matthew on one side, and all our Old Testament writers on the other, are at issue; and this has been so thoroughly felt by the commentators, that they acknowledge the absence of any such precise prediction as that quoted by the evangelist; but they urge that Matthew's meaning was, that the general tone of Messianic prophecy was in accordance with Jesus being called a Nazarene, or dweller at Nazareth. Having gone as far as this, it is no uncommon thing to find commentators of repute arguing that Samson, and Elijah, and others, had been Nazarites, or men with an obligation of abstemiousness upon them, and that as such they were typical of Christ, who dwelt at Nazareth that he might be called a Nazar*ene*, and so fulfil the type of their Nazar*ite*ship. Surely this mode of "explaining away" the difficulty is too absurd to need more than a statement in order that it may refute itself by its own folly. Our blessed Lord so entirely disowned all Nazariteship that he contrasted himself with the Nazarite Baptist in the words, "John came "neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a "devil: the Son of Man came eating and drinking, "and they say, Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-"bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." Other interpreters say, that "Nazarene" was a despicable name in our Saviour's time, and that by bearing this title Jesus fulfilled the predictions of that scorn which

was to be one of the characteristics of Messiah. This interpretation is very ingenious, and well worthy of consideration; but, when it has been examined, the reader will find that it explains a different prophecy from that which Matthew quotes. This explanation is to the effect, Jesus was called habitually "a Nazarene"—a name of ignominy—and so he fulfilled the prediction, "He is despised and rejected of men; "He was despised, and we esteemed him not:" but so did he not fulfil the prophecy, "He shall be called a "Nazarene" for there is no such prediction in the whole volume of the prophets. What then? It is conceivable that Matthew made a mistake in quoting the Old Testament? We answer that it is quite obvious that, whoever wrote our present Greek "Gospel according to Matthew," made a mistake here, just as he manifests either want of care or want of knowledge when, in a subsequent part of his narrative,* he writes, "Then was fulfilled that which "was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And "they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of "him that was valued, whom they of the children "of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's "field, as the Lord appointed me." Now, in the book of Zechariah† you may find words somewhat like these which Matthew quotes; but in all the writings of Jeremiah, from whom the evangelist declares them to be a quotation, the reader will find no such passage. In these verses, then, we see two plain errors in Matthew's gospel; and, if there were no other mistake in all the Bible, this ought to prevent our calling Scripture infallible, that is, wholly free from all error.

Section 5.—*Hosea's words, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son."*

In his second chapter, Matthew says that Jesus dwelt in Egypt for a time, "that" (*hina*, in the Greek

* Matthew xxvii. 9. † Zechariah xi. 12, 13.

—in order that) "it might be fulfilled which was "spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of "Egypt have I called my son." Now, if the reader will refer to the prophet Hosea,* he will find that it is of Israel, and not of Jesus, that this prophecy was written; so that here again, if the grammatical meaning of words is to be of any force in their interpretation, there is a hopeless discrepancy between Hosea's real utterance, and that which Matthew represents him as having uttered. Indeed, it is well known to every scholar, and it can hardly be denied by any man, whose prejudices have not blinded his perceptions or robbed him of his honesty, that a large portion of the quotations made in the New Testament from the Jewish Scriptures, are quoted in a wholly different signification from that in which they were originally written. In each of these misquotations there is, at least, a grammatical error, such as is quite irreconcilable with the idea of Inspirational infallibility.

Section 6.—*Comparison of the Two Narratives of the Temptation of Christ.*

The next point to be noticed by us, is the account of Our Lord's temptation, as it stands in two of the Gospel histories.

1. Matthew says,—"When the tempter came to" Jesus, he urged him to change the stones into bread.

2. Matthew says,—"Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city" and urgeth him to cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple.

3. Matthew says,—"Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain," and asketh worship from him on the condition of universal dominion.

1. Luke says,—"When forty days were ended" the devil urged Jesus to change stones into bread.

2. Luke says,—"And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain," asketh worship from him on the condition of universal dominion.

3. Luke says,—"And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple," and urged him to cast himself down.

* Hosea xi. 1.

Now, it is obvious that the last of the three temptations in Matthew's history, is the second of Luke's history. Both of these arrangements cannot be right. How may we know which is the true order of the temptations? Matthew, in his narrative, marks each of the temptations by an expression of time. Thus he says, "Then the devil" did so and so; and, "Again the devil" did so and so. Thus Matthew asserts the exactness of his arrangement. Luke merely connects the temptations by the conjunctive word "And;" but then this conjunction does, in a serious narrative, of itself sufficiently indicate the order of succession. Besides, Luke, in his preface, tells Theophilus that it is one of the special objects of his gospel "to write unto "him *in order*" (*kathexes*—in the order of their succession) those things in which he had been (catechetically) instructed. In this way both Matthew and Luke claim for themselves accuracy in the order of their differently-arranged histories. Which is right we cannot ascertain; but one must be wrong: and so this passage is another testimony of the Bible against its own supposed infallibility.

But the history of the temptation illustrates our argument in another way. Both Matthew and Luke profess to give us the exact dialogue—the very words which passed between Jesus and the devil. Both the evangelists introduce the several portions of the dialogue by the phrase "Jesus saith unto him," or "The devil "saith unto him." Now, in a dialogue so recorded, if the book containing it be wholly free from all error—that is, be infallible—there should be no difference between the sets of words which the speakers are represented as uttering. Let us then see, in this particular, what testimony the Bible bears of itself.

The dialogue between Jesus and Satan is given thus:

By Matthew.	By Luke.
Satan.—If thou be the Son of God, command *that these stones* be made bread.	Satan.—If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.
Jesus.—It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word *that proceedeth out of the mouth* of God.	Jesus.—It is written, *That* man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.
Satan.—If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee. and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.	Satan.—If thou be the Son of God cast thyself down *from hence*; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee to *keep thee*, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.
Jesus.—It is *written again*, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.	Jesus.—It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.
Satan.—All *these things* will I give thee if thou wilt *fall down* and worship me.	Satan.—All *this power* will I give thee, *and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it.* If thou, *therefore*, wilt worship me, all *shall be thine.*
Jesus.—Get thee *hence*, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.	Jesus.—Get thee *behind me*, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

This dialogue shows that the two evangelists, both professing to give the "*ipsissima verba*" of Jesus and of Satan, not only vary the expressions of the dialogue; but either Matthew omits, or Luke adds, the important idea in Satan's last speech, that the powers of the world had been delivered to Satan, and to whomsoever he would he gave them. Apart, then, from the order of arranging the temptations, there are discrepancies of word and thought in this dialogue, which forbid our believing the records of both Matthew and Luke to be free from all error. Which evangelist may be the more correct, it is not for us to say; but whichever of them be in error, as one certainly must be, the idea of Inspirational infallibility is rendered alike untenable.

Section 7.—*Frequent Discrepancies in Recording the Words said to have been Spoken or Written on any given occasion.*

Nor is it only in this case that such discrepancies manifest themselves to the careful observer. In almost every instance where two or more evangelists record the same conversation, the various interlocutors are represented as saying the exact words written; and yet the several accounts of their words differ remarkably. The sermon on the Mount occupies three long chapters* in Matthew's history; but it is condensed into twenty-nine verses and a half in the sixth chapter of Luke: and yet there are one or two points introduced into this shorter statement of the sermon, which have no place in the longer statement.

A.—Example of such Discrepancies in the Superscription of the Cross.

The four evangelists all tell us the words that were written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin, as a superscription on Our Blessed Master's cross; and yet it is demonstrably true that no two of them agree in their accounts even of these words. They stand thus:—

"This is Jesus the King of the Jews."—Matthew xxvii. 37.

"The King of the Jews."—Mark xv. 26,

"This is the King of the Jews."—Luke xxiii. 38.

"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."—John xix. 19.

Whichever of these four superscriptions may be regarded by any reader as the real one, the other three must be acknowledged as just so many manifestations

* Matthew v. vi. vii.

of error in Scripture; and accordingly, as so many testimonies borne by the Holy Book itself to the effect, that there is in it neither mark of collusion nor sign of infallibility.

B.—Example of such Discrepancies in Peter's Denials.

Another remarkable illustration of this argument is to be found in the narrative of Peter's denying his Lord, as it is recorded by the Four Evangelists. The discrepancy in this case has been felt to be so unquestionable, that some of the Harmonists—if not all—have been fain to represent the four predictions of that denial as having been uttered on three different occasions. Matthew and Mark, Mr. Gresswell[1] thinks,* record the same predictions; and we shall, therefore, content ourselves with observing the discrepancies in their narratives, without insisting on what seems to us highly probable—namely, that the variously-expressed predictions of this denial, in Luke and John, also point to the same utterance of Jesus. Now, if the reader examine this matter, he will find that, according to Matthew, Jesu's words were, "Verily I say "unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou "shalt deny me thrice;" whilst, according to Mark, Our Saviour's words on this same occasion were "Ver-"ily I say unto thee, that this day, even this night, before "the cock crow *twice*, thou shalt deny me thrice." Thus far we have no evidence of infallible exactness and unfailing agreement in these two acknowledged records of the same words. But we proceed to notice the fourfold narrative of the sad accomplishment of this denial of Jesus.

In the first denial, a damsel is represented by each evangelist as saying—

* *E. g.*—*Vide* Gresswell's Diss., vol. iii, p. 193.

MATT. XXVII.	MARK XIV.	LUKE XXII.	JOHN XVIII.
Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.	Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.	This man was also with him.	Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?

Peter is represented as saying in reply—

I know not what thou sayest.	I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest.	Woman, I know him not.	I am not.

At this point Mark alone adds, "and the cock crew."

In the second denial the several narratives run thus—

Another maid said, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.	A maid said again, This is one of them.	Another (*heteros*, another *man*) said, Thou art also of them.	The by-standers said, Art not thou also one of his disciples?

Here it is observable again that no two evangelists give the challenge, which is supposed to have elicited but one reply, in the same words. Peter's second denial stands thus—

MATT. XXVII.	MARK XIV.	LUKE XXII.	JOHN XVIII.
Again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.	And he denied it again.	And Peter said, *Man*, I am not.	He denied it, and said, I am not.

Matthew alone speaks of the oath used in this answer. Three of the evangelists put widely different answers into the mouth of Peter; and Luke, who represented the question on this occasion as having been put by a man, makes Peter employ the term "Man!" with emphasis in his reply.

The third challenge in each gospel stands thus—

The by-standers say, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.	The by-standers say, Surely thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.	About one hour after, another confidently affirmed, Of a truth, this fellow also was with him; for he is a Galilean.	One of the high priest's servants saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

Thus various, again, are the records of the remarks which drew from Peter the third denial, to the effect—

Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man.	But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.	Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest.	Peter then denied again.

Here again, as in the two former denials, there is a wide discrepancy between Luke's answer and that recorded by Matthew and Mark. Not only does Luke say that Peter's brief denial was addressed to one particular man; but Luke adds, that "immediately, while Peter "yet spake, the cock crew, and the Lord turned and "looked upon Peter." That sorrowing look of pitying, almost unreproving love, melted the denier's heart. Compunction and repentance were, according to this unmatched, exquisite narrative of St. Luke, so instantaneous, that there was no time for the cursing and swearing of which Matthew and Mark tell us, unless, indeed, the evangelists are here recording wholly different denials of Peter's. But, this idea once admitted, we should be compelled to acknowledge at least ten different denials, for that is the number of distinct forms in which Peter's three denials stand recorded in the four gospels. As was to be expected, from what we have already seen, Matthew, Luke, and John record the first crowing of the cock after the third denial; but Mark says this was the second time the cock had crowed. If Mark be right in this assertion, what becomes of the other evangelists' words, "This night, *before* the cock shall crow, thou shalt "deny me thrice?" If Mark be wrong in this matter, what becomes of inspirational infallibility? If Mark, an inspired Bible writer, might err in this instance, why may not he, or any other sacred penman, have erred in recording any most important doctrine, even as they differ in their records of the words of institution in the Lord's supper, and as they widely and most perplexingly differ in their accounts of Christ's several appearances after his resurrection? These fourfold narratives are evidently not the dictation of

an infallible Spirit, however much they may be the compositions of four honest early Christian men, in whom the promised Spirit of their Master was powerfully carrying on His glorious work of enlightenment and sanctification.

C.—The Census of David, the Purchase of Aceldama, the Hour of the Crucifixion, the Numbers of the Plague-Stricken, are further Illustrations of such Inaccuracies.

These discrepancies, which mark all honest contemporary records, and which thoroughly evince the fallibility of man, may be multiplied to a great extent by any diligent student who will peruse such works as Strauss's Life of Jesus, or De Wette's Introduction to the Bible.

Such a reader may observe, and should reflect upon the fact, that the book of Samuel tells us (2 Samuel xxiv. 9) that the result of David's famous numbering of the people was, that "Joab gave up the sum;" "and there were in Israel 800,000 valiant men that "drew the sword; and the men of Judah were 500,-"000 men." This seems a marvellous army, 1,300,000 soldiers, for a territory less than two hundred miles long by a hundred miles broad. But what is our amazement when we find the book of Chronicles (1 Chron. xxi. 5) giving the result of the *same* census as, besides the men of Levi and Benjamin, 1,100,000 soldiers in Israel, and 470,000 soldiers in Judah; *i. e.*, 1,570,000 soldiers from Palestine alone!

Such a reader will find that there are two accounts of what gave to the field of blood its name of horror, "Aceldama." On the one hand, Matthew* tells us that tle field was so called because, after Judas, the traitor, had cast the price of his treachery down in the

* Matt xxvii. 3, &c.

temple and had gone and hanged himself, the chief priests bought with that head-money the potter's field to bury strangers in. On the other hand, Peter, in the book of the Acts,* says, that Judas "purchased a "field with the reward of iniquity; and, falling head-"long, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his "bowels gushed out."

A careful student may observe that the evangelist Mark says,† "it was the third hour" (that is, 9 a.m.), "and they crucified" Jesus; whereas the beloved disciple,‡ in his account of his Master's trial and death, says, that as late as "the sixth hour" (that is, at our midday) Jesus was yet before the judgment-seat of Pilate, and that weak, time-serving judge was still writhing under the dread of condemning "that just "man."

Or, again, such a student will observe that, in a certain plague, the book of Numbers§ gives 24,000 as the multitude who fell; whereas Paul, writing to the Corinthians about the same plague, states the victims as 23,000.

SECTION 8.—*The People, Learned and Unlearned, are noticing these Discrepancies.*

THAT there are in Scripture these, and a hundred other discrepancies, amounting sometimes to positive and irreconcilable contradictions, is what every careful student cannot fail to discover—what every reader of general literature has pointed out to him in Horne's Introduction to the Scriptures, and in many other common books of so-called Christian evidences, if, indeed, he does not read of these and other discrepancies in the powerful, bold, and self-sacrificing language of Theodore Parker and Francis Newman; and this, too,

* Acts i. 18.
† Mark xv. 25.
‡ John xix. 14.
§ Numbers xxv. 9.

is what multitudes even of our laboring and mechanical classes are devouring in the lectures and publications of men like Messrs. Holyoake, Barker, and their coadjutors in "Secularism."

In vast numbers of cases, alternative questions may be proposed—Did 23.000 die in the plague, or was it 24,000? Was the Saviour crucified at nine in the morning, or was he still on trial at mid-day? Did Judas buy the Aceldama, or were the chief priests its purchasers? Did the cock crow once before Peter's two last denials, and is Mark right, or did the cock not crow at all till after Peter's three denials, and is Mark wrong? Alternative questions may thus be readily framed by the score; and, whichever alternative the reader accepts, the Bible alike denies its own infallibility. In all such alternative questions, the conviction on our mind is, that one or other of the inspired penmen was, in each case, mistaken; and, on whichever side the error may have been, the supposed infallibility of the Bible is equally disproved.

CHAPTER III.

THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH SCRIPTURAL ERRORS RECOGNIZED BY THE LEARNED AND THE PIOUS.

SECTION 1.—*Forced Harmonies abandoned, and the Truth confessed.*

We know that there are devices by which it is possible to fence with these errors in the history of Holy Writ; but, for ourselves, we have too often felt, as we were using them, that our heart misgave us lest, instead of the sword of the Spirit, which is every soul-touching word of God, we might be holding a lie in our right

hand. For ourselves, we have endured too much bitter anguish in this matter to doubt that the unsatisfactory apologies of well-meaning Christians, whose wish it is to defend what they suppose to be "the faith," have repelled many an anxious inquirer, and driven many an earnest heart into the bleak inhospitalities of unbelief. But truth is verily great; and although the popular mind—alike of believers on the one side, and of unbelievers on the other—is still far removed from logical and true views on the grand subject of Inspiration, yet there has been progress in the right direction; so that the intelligent Christian apologist of the present day, concedes to his opponent many a point which, erewhile, it was thought wise to hold stoutly by in spite of difficulty and unreasonableness.

Section 2.—*The opinions of several Learned and Eminent Divines.*

A.—The Opinion of Neander.

Hear on this subject the words of that Neander, who, as one of the foremost scholars, thinkers, and theologians even of Germany, and as, at the same time, a man of blameless holiness in the eyes of his fellow men, was chosen by the King of Prussia to reply to the great sceptical work of Strauss on the Life of Jesus. It is in opening his vindication of an historical basis for the religion of Christ, as opposed to the mythical theory of his learned adversary, that Neander writes—*

"It must be regarded as one of the greatest boons
" which the purifying process of Protestant theology in
"Germany has conferred upon faith, as well as science,
" that the old, mechanical view of Inspiration has been
"so generally abandoned. That doctrine, and the

* English translation of Neander's Life of Christ, page 8. Bohn's edition, 1851.

"forced harmonies to which it led, demanded a clerk-
"like accuracy in the evangelical accounts, and could
"not admit even the slightest contradiction in them ;
"but we are now no longer compelled to have recourse
"to subtilties against which our sense of truth rebels.
"In studying the historical connexion of our Saviour's
"life and actions by the application of an unfettered
"criticism, we reach a deeper sense in many of his
"sayings than the bonds of the old dogmatism would
"have allowed." These words from the Christian apologist, Neander, fully confirm the view of Inspirational infallibility which we have so far taken, and they are in entire accordance with all which we have still to put forward on this subject.

B.—The Opinion of Bishop Burnet.

Lest the "old"-ness, which Neander ascribes to the opinions that he and we alike oppose, should mislead any reader into the idea that our teaching is a novelty among those who call themselves Christians, we extract the following remarkable words from Bishop Burnet's observations on the Ninth Article : *—When "an argument is brought in Scripture to prove another "thing by, though we are bound to acknowledge the "conclusion, yet we are not always sure of the premises, "for they are often founded upon received opinions." Thus inconsistently did the old Bishop of Salisbury believe the conclusions of Scripture arguments infallible, while he admitted that parts of Scripture—namely, the premises of its arguments—were fallible, and might not be binding on us. What is new, in our views on Inspiration, is not their matter or their existence—but the clear acknowledging of them to oneself, and the candid avowal of them to other men.

* Burnet on the Thirty-nine Articles, Oxford edition, 1814, p. 157.

C.—The Opinion of Professor Tholuck.

The truth of this statement will be sufficiently apparent to any reader who is moderately acquainted with the history of theology, or who will peruse two short articles of Professor Tholuck's, which were translated in the July and August numbers of "Evangelical "Christendom" in 1850.*

Thus we believe that great progress has of late years been made, not in discovering new truth relative to Inspiration, but in the clearer perception and more open avowal of old truth, the existence of which has been always suspected, and sometimes manifestly felt, but which has been too long feared and suppressed. As evidence of this progress, we can adduce from the writings of four living and most enlightened English prelates, words which, even now, some well-meaning Christians, whose intellects are of slow-marching power, reprehend; but which, seventy years ago, would have been censured on all sides as little or nothing less than what Tom Paine or Voltaire wanted.

D.—The Opinion of Bishop Hinds (Norwich).

Thus the Bishop of Norwich, Dr. Hinds, in the midst of much which is in accordance with the popular notion that Inspiration has made the Bible infallible, writes thus—†

"To religious instruction of whatever kind is con-
"fined the Scriptural character of Scripture — the
"agency of the Holy Spirit." * * * * "It is not
"therefore truth of all kinds that the Bible was in-
"spired to teach, but only such truth as tends to reli-
"gious edification; and the Bible is consequently

* Published by Patridge and Oakey, London.

† Hinds on Inspiration, pp. 151, 152. Fellowes, London, 1831.

"infallible as far as regards this, and this alone." * * * "Accordingly, if we wish to determine the "authority of any assertion or direction in Scripture, "the rule which Scripture itself furnishes is, that, as "far as it is religious instruction, it is infallible; as "far as it not, its authority is that which attaches to "the work of an honest and sincere author, and varies "according to his individual circumstances, and the "circumstances of the country and age in which he "wrote."

E.—The Opinion of Archbishop Whately (Dublin).

Dr. Whately, the present ingenious and most instructive Archbishop of Dublin, is not sparse in his commendations of Bishop Hinds' works in general, and of the volume on Inspiration in particular; and the Archbishop himself writes—*

"In matters, indeed, unconnected with religion, "such as points of history, or natural philosophy, a "writer who professes (as the Apostles do) to be com-"municating a divine revelation, imparted to him "through the means of miracles, may be as liable to "error as other men, without any disparagement to "his pretensions; but if we reject as false *any part* of "the *religion* which he professes himself divinely sent "to teach, we cannot, consistently, believe but that his "pretensions are either an imposture or a delusion, "and that he is *wholly* unworthy of credit."

We do not see the force of the last part of the Archbishop's assertion. It is at least conceivable that a man might have his attention drawn to a revelation by its miracles. He might feel himself indubitably sent by God to teach that religion which had been so

* Whately's Sermons on the principal Christian Festivals, &c., p. 90; Note to the Sermon on the Apostle Thomas; Third edition. J. W. Parker, London, 1854.

imparted to him through the means of miracles; and yet he might, from a failure of perception or of memory, or from other causes, err in his mode of teaching a religion so imparted to him, and which he was sent to teach. Thus Peter, though he was divinely sent to teach a religion miraculously imparted to him, was manifestly in error—and that religious error too—when he consented at Antioch so to compromise the truth of that very religion, that Paul "withstood him to the "face, because he was to be blamed." On these grounds, we entirely dissent from the latter part of this quotation from Dr. Whately, which we have thought it fair to give in its entirety, lest we should seem to suppress that which a man so worthy of respect had written against the very views that we uphold. In a subsequent part of our inquiry, the supposed connexion between Miracles and Inspirational Infallibility will come properly under our notice. Here we would simply direct attention to the fact, that, at least in matters of history or natural philosophy, Bishops Hinds and Whately are agreed that the Bible is fallible.

F.—The Opinion of another living English Bishop.

The learned and Right Reverend Translator* of "Schleiermacher's Critical Essay on St. Luke," writes thus, in page 15 of his Introduction to that work:—
"As the more rigid theory of Inspiration was aban-
"doned by the learned on account of the insuperable
"difficulties opposed to it by the discrepancies found
"in the Gospels; so these same discrepancies compel

* If the reader should be at a loss to know who this "Translator" is, we may refer him to a statement made in Horne's Introduction to the Bible, vol. v. p. 362, ninth edition. Mr. Horne's statement is repeated in very many tolerably well-known books, and has never, so far as we are aware, been contradicted by the Bishop or his friends.

" us to admit, that the superintending control of the " Spirit was not exerted to exempt the sacred writers " altogether from errors and inadvertencies."

These are most weighty words, and they come from a writer than whom none is more competent to express an opinion. This passage points to three different truths :—

1st.—The difficulties in the way of a rigid theory of inspiration are insuperable.

2nd.—These difficulties show that Scripture is not wholly exempt from error, that is, is not infallible.

3rd.—The learned have abandoned a rigid theory of inspiration, and have been compelled to admit that Scripture is in some measure fallible.

The Right Reverend Prelate from whom we quote does not fix limits to Scriptural fallibility, as the Archbishop of Dublin and the Bishop of Norwich do. But we do not wish to state the case at all overstrainedly ; and so we will suppose that these three prelates go no further than acknowledging that, while the religious teaching of Scripture is infallible, the historical, the philosophical, and generally, the non-religious information of the Bible, is honestly but fallibly given. Thus, then, these prelates do not assert the Bible to be an infallible book, or a book whose teaching is wholly free from error ; but they maintain that the Bible is a book which contains fallible portions and infallible portions. It is not an infallible book ; but there is something infallible in it.

Surely the line between the fallible and the infallible in Scripture should be very clearly and strongly marked ; and the truly amiable Bishop of Norwich thinks it is so. " When, for example," he says (page 152 of his work on Inspiration), " Moses, in relating " the history of the Creation, speaks of the sun being " set in the firmament, his authority for the astronomi- " cal truth is only human ; the religious truth involved " in it is, that God created and appointed the sun its " sphere ; and in this the authority of Moses is infal-

"lible." Dr. Hinds gives several other illustrations, to show how clear the distinction is between the religious and infallible on the one hand, and the non-religious and only human or fallible on the other. But if this notion of the fallible and the infallible be correct, it is of wide application indeed. Not merely when the sun stood still at Joshua's bidding—not merely when the dumb ass rebuked the obstinacy of the prophet—not merely when Ezekiel lay on his left side 390 days, and then on his right side 40 days, may we say the historical truth of these narratives rests on fallible human evidence; and it is only the religious truth involved in it which, in each case, is infallible. Not only may we say thus: we may go much further, and say consistently, that in the whole Old Testament account of the Creation, the Patriarchal Age, and the Jewish Nation, and similarly in the whole New Testament description of the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Our Lord, the "authority for "the historical truth is only human; the religious "truth involved in it is" that God is love and that He will have all men to be saved; "and in this the "authority of" the Bible "is infallible."

The author and approver of these ideas are surely too clear thinkers and too good logicians not to have seen the whole width and breadth in which this principle for distinguishing between the fallible and the infallible in Holy Writ would apply. Thus, entirely, then, do Bishops Whately, Hinds, and another, agree with us, that the Bible is not an infallible book, however holy, true, and profitable we may all thankfully acknowledge it to be.

G.—The Opinion of Bishop Hampden (Hereford).

But we undertook to adduce the testimony on this subject of a fourth living and most learned prelate.

In his Bampton Lectures,* which have been too little read and too shamefully slandered, Dr. Hampden, the present Bishop of Hereford, after showing the differences by which Morality, the science of Ethics, is distinguished from Religion, proceeds to write thus,— "Christianity, in fact, leaves Ethical science, as such, "precisely where it found it; all the duties which "Ethical science prescribes remain on their own foot- "ing, not altered or weakened, but affirmed and "strengthened, by the association of Religion. And, "so independent is the science of Ethics of the sup- "port and the ennobling which it receives from "Religion, that it would be nothing strange or ob- "jectionable in a revelation, were we to find embodied "in its language much of the false Ethical Philosophy "which systems may have established. This, I con- "ceive, would appear to those who bear in mind the "real distinctness of Religion and Moral Science, "nothing more objectionable than the admission into "the sacred volume of descriptions involving false "theories of Natural Philosophy."

These words of Dr. Hampden's recognise errors in Natural Philosophy as having a place in Scripture, just as his right reverend brothers had recognised errors in the Bible on subjects not strictly religious. But the Bishop of Hereford, in the eloquent expression of his deep yet transparent thought, advances even a step further than his brothers on the bench have ventured. He is of opinion that there may possibly be errors in Scripture on points of morality. "It would be nothing strange or objectionable in a "Revelation"—(Query, does the Bible profess itself to be "a revelation?" Does it not rather purport to be the human record of a divine revelation? but, even in a Revelation, Bishop Hampden would deem it nothing strange or objectionable)—"were we to find "embodied in its language much of the false ethical

* Dr. Hampden's Bampton Lectures. Third Edition. pp. 301, 302 Publishers, Simpkin, Marshall, & Co.

"philosophy which systems may have established." Thus, for example, when Abraham and Isaac and Jacob are untruthful themselves, or teach their wives untruthfulness, and the Bible praises them for their general conduct, and represents the Deity as miraculously favouring those patriarchs, but does not distinctly reprehend their untruthfulness—when the Israelites think that, under any circumstances, it can be morally right for them to slay the women and children of the Canaanites, and the Old Testament rather approves of this their thought than otherwise—or when Abraham is led to believe that child-sacrifice can be morally right, and the ethical error of this belief is not shown to him – in these and many such cases, as in the histories of Samson, Jephtha, David, and Solomon, there may be embodied in the language of Scripture, *much* of the false ethical philosophy which systems may have established.

SECTION 3.—*These Writers own to Scriptural Errors in every thing except Religion.*

So then, according to the confessions of the rulers and overseers of the English Established Church, there may be errors of science, of history, and of morality in the Bible; but still the Idea of Scriptural Infallibility, on matters of religion, must be maintained. Now, "the learned" few may be able to perceive the nice distinctions between the religious, and therefore infallible sections of the Bible, as contrasted with its non-religious and therefore fallible sections or meanings; but the unlearned many will surely not be able to perceive distinctly these shades of difference.

If, on the ground of these recognised and palpable errors in the science, history, and morality of Scripture, our bishops had said clearly and intelligibly, that the Bible was, however excellent, yet a fallible

book, we should have admired their clear-sightedness and their courage even more than we now do; but, as it is, our ecclesiastical rulers seem to confess a great part of the truth, and then to stop short, and suddenly uphold the idea of religious infallibility being in a fallible book. We see the meaning of this distinction, and we can sympathize with the natural timidity of these dignitaries; but we cannot help fearing that in the case of a religion which, like the popular conception of Christianity, has its doctrines based for the most part on historical facts, the opinions advanced by these learned and truly venerable men deal with the sacred terms "Inspiration" and "Infallibility" in a manner likely to be most injurious to the religious truthfulness and the Christian faith of ordinary intellects; and for ourselves, we, as part of the unlearned many, are ready to exclaim—Oh! enviable logical perception, never to confound morality with religion! and never to doubt the mysteries of the faith, whilst all the narratives of facts, on which those mysteries are based, are avowedly open to criticism and disbelief!

CHAPTER IV.

ARE THERE NO RELIGIOUS ERRORS IN HOLY WRIT?

We cannot blame these prelates for their acknowledgments as to the partial fallibility of Scripture; for we have seen in the Bible itself abundant reasons which compel us to agree in their confessions. The question, however, still remains, as to whether the sacred volume is infallible in its *religious* teaching. When one has shown a Romanist that Popes, and Councils, and Churches have erred, and therefore cannot be infallible, the constant rejoinder is—"We never said they "were wholly infallible, but only we declare them to be "infallible in their official and regular teaching." Just so it too frequently is with the Protestant: one shows him that there are errors in the Bible, and therefore that the Bible cannot be infallible; and he, by the mouths of his choicest spokesmen, rejoins, "We do not "say the Bible is altogether infallible; but we assert "that Holy Writ is infallible in its religious teaching." Well then, it is on this solemn question that, in the interests of truth, which we believe to be identical with the interests of Christianity, we are about to join issue with Dr. Hinds and his friends.

SECTION 1.—*Does the Bible permit us to regard its Religious Teaching as Inspirationally Infallible?*

A.—THE HISTORY OF JAEL.

As a case in which it is not very easy (if at all possible) to separate the religious and the moral ele-

ments, let us look first at the history of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite.

There had been a fierce battle between the long-oppressed but now victorious Israelites, and the discomfited hosts of Jabin king of Hazor. Heber the Kenite was not an Israelite, and therefore was not necessarily one of the Canaanite's enemies. Nay, we are even told that "there was peace between Jabin "the king of Hazor, and the house of Heber the "Kenite." Sisera, the captain of Jabin's host, was compelled to flee away, on foot, for his life. In the tent of the friendly Heber he was affectionately received, with all the hospitality of the East. Relying on the good faith of his hostess, Jael, Heber's wife, Sisera composed himself to sleep. Then Jael, from some motive which is not assigned, stole upon the slumbering Sisera, and slew him by driving one of the tent nails into his forehead. Shortly afterwards she showed the smitten chief to his pursuer, Barak.

This whole transaction is recorded in the Bible in language worthy of the grandest tragedy; and, moreover, an inspired prophetess, Deborah, who had foretold the manner of Sisera's death, chants the glory and the vengeance of the Canaanitish overthrow; and in this chant she recounts the deed of Jael, and sings, "Blessed "above women shall Jael, the wife of Heber the "Kenite, be; blessed shall she be above women in the "tent."

We must leave Dr. Hampden to draw the lines of demarcation between the fallible morality and the infallible religion of this history and this teaching. For ourselves, we think it perilous to attempt teaching the purest religious principles by such questionable morality without designating the deed of Jael by its true name; and we put it to every conscience which knows humanity, or has been enlightened by the New Testament, whether the true and proper name of this scripturally-approved deed be not treachery and murder most base, foul, and unnatural?

B.—Some of the Imprecations of Jeremiah, the Psalmist, and Paul.

The too probable religious effects of this story appear in such passages as the following; for instance —in Jeremiah's dreadful imprecation of Divine vengeance on his enemies; * or in Psalm cix. 6—20, including the words, "Let his children be fatherless, "and his wife a widow; let his children be continually "vagabonds and beg; let them seek their bread also "out of desolate places; let the extortioner catch all "that he hath; and let the stranger spoil his labour. "Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither "let there be any to favour his fatherless children. " * * Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered "with the Lord; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out:" or, in Psalm lviii. 6—10, which concludes with the assurance, "The righteous shall rejoice "when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet "in the blood of the wicked:" or, again the too probable effects of teaching, which, on the principle that God's enemies are to perish, can approve a deed like that of Jael, are seen in such a prayer as that of Paul for the condemnation and punishment of his opponent: "Alexander the coppersmith did me much "evil: the Lord reward him according to his works."

Now, of these and the numerous other imprecations of the Bible, we shall only say that, in spirit as well as in letter, they are direct contradictions of Him who said, "Love your enemies: bless them that curse you: "pray for them which despitefully use you and "persecute you;" and who, for his time-serving and unrighteous crucifiers, prayed, saying, "Father, forgive "them, for they know not what they do."

Either the sinless one, our God and Saviour, must be in error in this his religious teaching of love and

* Jeremiah xviii. 21—23.

forgiveness, or Deborah, Jeremiah, the Psalmist, and Paul, must have been in error when they religiously —or rather, it should be said, irreligiously—exemplified and gloried in their vengeful wrath and dreadful imprecations against their enemies. Which of these two parties was at fault, no sane man will doubt; but on whichever side the error must be confessed, it is a direct testimony of Scripture itself against the idea that the Bible is infallible, even in its moral and religious teaching.

C.—The Jewish Belief (or Disbelief) of Man's Life in a Future World.

The question as to man's existence after death Dr. Hampden seems to regard as quite apart from morality, a purely *religious* question. Let us, therefore, consider how far the teaching of Scripture, on this subject, is consistent, and so, possibly, infallible. Every one who has read Bishop Warburton's "Divine Legation of Moses," is aware that that ingenious and most learned writer represents it as one of the peculiarities by which Judaism is distinguished from Heathenism, that, whereas it was never attempted to rule any Heathen state without the sanction of future rewards which might be hoped for by the obedient, and future punishments which must be anticipated by the disobedient, the Jews were always governed by Moses and his successors, without any reference to a future state, by the mere appeal to that wondrous dispensation of a special Providence which unfailingly cast down the wicked, and so upheld the good that the righteous was never seen forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.

Such was Warburton's clever argument; and, whether he was right or wrong, he has many wise Christian men in the present day who agree with his opinion, that in all the Old Testament there is no

distinct doctrine of a future state. Such men show that Job's words had manifest reference to his full expectation, that he should find a physician to heal him, and restore him to health in this world. They show that every passage, generally adduced to prove that the Old Testament teaches the doctrine of a future state, requires such an interpretation as makes it refer to this life, and not to a future state; and then they go on to prove that there are many passages of the Jewish Scriptures which show, that pious Jews entertained a distinct disbelief of a future life.

Now, the least attention must, we suppose, convince any unblinded reader of this truth. For instance, what is the teaching of the sixth Psalm? "Return, "O Lord, deliver my soul: oh, save me for thy "mercies' sake; for in death there is no remembrance "of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?"

If any passage like this could be found in Aristotle, or in Plato, would it not be paraded as an irrefragable proof that the wisest heathens denied the immortality of the soul? Aristotle has left on record his belief that, after death, human souls are cognisant, at least in some degree, of their family's welfare or ill fortune; yet, because he has once spoken of death as "a "sort of goal in our existence" (*peras ti*), that is, as a changing point, where one race is ended and whence the start of a new life is to be made, therefore this saying of the great philosopher is handed about, among the ignorant, as a proof that Aristotle doubted whether death was not annihilation. What a god-send it would be for narrow-minded, truth-fearing theologians, if they had only found Psalm vi. 5 in Aristotle instead of in the Hagiographa! But, lest any should say that this verse from the Psalm refers merely to the body whilst it lies crumbling in the grave, and is so far from denying a future state of the soul's existence that it does not even question the doctrine of the body's resurrection, let us read the words of another Psalm, the eighty-eighth, "Lord, I have

"called daily unto thee; I have stretched out my hands "unto thee. Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? "Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving "kindness be declared in the grave? "or thy faith- "fulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known "in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of "forgetfulness?"

There can, assuredly, be no reasonable dispute as to the doctrine of this Psalm. The dead are unconscious. No mystery is solved for them. The soul goes to no brighter realm of light. "The land of the "hereafter" is "the dark" and the region of forgetfulness. Nor is there any prospect of an end to this state of things. There shall be no resurrection; for the dead shall not arise and praise God.

Once more, let any reader see the practical effect of this teaching on the mind of a man eminent for his piety, at a time when he thought death was at hand. Hezekiah's life was miraculously prolonged for fifteen years; but, before he heard that such a continuance of life was in the Divine will towards him, what had been Hezekiah's sentiments in the time of dangerous sickness? Isaiah tells us that those sentiments found utterance in such words as these, "I said, in the cut- "ting off of my days I shall go to the gates of the grave. "I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I "shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of "the living. I shall behold man no more with the in- "habitants of the world." * * * * * * "From day "even to night wilt thou make an end of me." * * * * * "For the grave cannot praise thee: death cannot "celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit can- "not hope for thy truth." These and other similar words of despondency did the famous Hebrew monarch, Hezekiah, utter, when he feared that death was at hand to "make an end of him." It is quite needless to prove, by quotation, that the New Testament Scriptures contradict these sombre views of death:

they confessedly teach the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of a glorified, spiritual body.

Both these doctrines cannot be true. Either the despairing idea of annihilation must be true, and the hopeful thought of a better world wrong; or, the doctrine of immortality must be true, and the thought of annihilation false. Whichever alternative is chosen, the notion of the Bible being an infallible teacher, even of religion, is alike contravened by Scripture itself.

D.—The Apostolic Belief as to the Time of Christ's Second Coming to Judge the World.

There is another subject which, as being wholly unknown without the aid of revelation, and as professing to be a point in the Christian revelation, we presume that even Bishop Hampden would acknowledge to be a purely religious subject. Our allusion is to the second Messianic Advent, or the coming of God's anointed One to judgment.

We are not about to discuss the question, whether the Old Testament writers were always happily exact in their anticipations of the Christ. Our object is rather to ascertain whether the New Testament writings are infallible in their views on this one subject connected with Christianity.

At the outset, it is not a little observable, that the sacred penmen represent our Lord as saying, at one time, that of the day and hour when the Lord shall come knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven; but my Father only.* Whereas, at another moment, they tell us that the Saviour assured his followers that the fall of Jerusalem; the coming of the Son of Man, with power and great glory, in such a

* Matt. xxiv. 36—42.

way as that "all the tribes of the earth should see" Him;* and the gathering together of his elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other—"*all these things* shall be fulfilled † before the then existing generation should have passed away.

Now, manifestly, *all* those things did not come to pass before the apostolic generation had passed away; and, therefore, unless any man is prepared to think our blessed Saviour liable to err, we must believe that in this, as in other demonstrable cases, Evangelists slightly varied the form of what the Son of God had said; and so, unintentionally, gave to Jesu's words a meaning which he did not intend they should bear, and in which they were not true. We are the more confirmed in this belief, when we find, in the Gospels, contradictory reports of our Lord's teaching on this subject, such as those contrasted at the beginning of this paragraph.

Proceeding from this point, it is clear that the New Testament writings anticipated the day of the Lord, and the consummation of all things, as an event which was to take place in the lifetime of many then upon earth. We can only pretend to give a few texts, as specimens, in proof of this assertion.

Let the reader consider how often the expression "at hand," occurs in connexion with the idea of Christ's second coming to judge the world. Thus we read, "The night is far spent: the day is at hand" (Rom. xiii. 11; and, "Let your moderation be known "unto all men: the Lord is at hand" (Phil. iv. 5); and, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let "him be anathema maranatha," that is, anathema in the day of the Lord, which is at hand (1 Cor. xvi. 22); and "The end of all things is at hand" (1 Pet. iv. 7); and, in the very last chapter of the book of Revelation, (Rev. xxii. 10, 12), "The time is at hand." "Behold, "I come quickly; my reward is with me, to give every

* Matt. xxiv. 30, 31. † Matt. xxiv. 32, 33.

"man according as his work shall be." These passages, taken in connexion with the teaching of the gospel-writers, can leave no doubt in the mind of a reasonable man, as to the early period when the New Testament writers expected the second advent of our Lord. Let it be remembered, too, that the words (in 2 Thess. ii. 2), "Be not shaken in mind, nor be "troubled; neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by "letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at "hand," are by no means opposed to the numerous other passages already quoted. All that Paul here teaches is, that the Thessalonians should not allow the momentary expectation of Christ to interfere with their active duties, or their peace of mind. Indeed, if the first eight verses of this chapter be carefully read, it will be perceived that the upshot of what they state is this: There were at Thessalonica two contrary powers at work—there was a spirit of wickedness, called by the Apostle "the mystery of iniquity;" and there was, opposed to this, an influence (apparently an individual influence) for good, called by Paul, "he "who now letteth until he be taken out of the way." Upon the removal, by death or otherwise of this good influence, Paul expected that the prime mover of the wickedness in Thessalonica, called by Paul "that "wicked," would stand forth as the unblushing abettor of evil, glorying in all iniquity, and doing so even in the name of God: and *then*, in the lifetime of those who, in the Apostle's own day, were living at Thessalonica—then the day of the Lord should come to the overthrow of "that wicked, whom the Lord shall "consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall de-"stroy *with the brightness of his coming*." Thus, this very passage, which seemed to postpone the day of the Lord, is itself an additional proof that Paul systematically taught, as part of his religious doctrine, that Christ's second coming was to be in the lifetime of the then present generation.

To the same effect we find the New Testament writers under a firm conviction that they were living in "the last days." This is unmistakably apparent in such passages as the following :—"Christ was manifest "*in these last times* for you" (1 Pet. i. 20.) ; "It is the "last time ; and, as ye have heard that antichrist shall "come, even now there are many antichrists ; whereby "*we know that it is the last time*" (1 John ii. 18) : "God "hath *in these last days* spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb i, 2). But some may say that "the last days" was a well known Hebrew appellation for the whole Messianic epoch. Such scholars may truly say that the last days, according to Hebrew-christian parlance, set in when Jesus established his doctrine, and still continue, and will continue till the "end, when Christ "shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even "the Father" (1 Cor. xv 24). We readily grant that such was the Jewish custom in designating the Messianic dispensation ; but still we maintain that the New Testament writers believed that "the ends of "the world were come upon them" (1 Cor. x. 11) most literally ; and, in support of this our belief, we adduce one more passage in addition to those already referred to. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews enumerates a long catalogue of men who, in former generations, "having all obtained a good report "through faith, received not the promise ; God having "provided some better thing for us, *that they without "us should not be made perfect.*" Now, let the reader ask himself what meaning these last words can bear. What conceivable blessing or "promise" was there, connected with Christianity, which would have been exhausted before the Christian epoch, if its enjoyment had been commenced by men in the days of Isaac, or Abraham, or earlier ? What promise, connected with the gospel, fails to us, though it was made good in the first century ? Does not belief still, as ever, bring peace, and hope, and joy, and holiness, which constitute salvation ? Does not Paul himself declare, that know-

ing Christ after the Spirit, as we do, is preferable to knowing him after the flesh, as he and his cotemporaries had done? Of what promise have the bygone ages of Christianity robbed us? In what respect are we losers because Christian perfection began to be introduced into the world eighteen centuries ago? Nay, are we not manifold gainers by the blessings that are now in the world, by reason of the patient ministrations of the Spirit through all these centuries? Similarly, what would the men of Paul's day have lost, if it had pleased God to fulfil his glorious promises at a day long anterior to their life? What can be the meaning of "God having provided some better thing "for us, that the elders *without us* should not be made "perfect?" It has puzzled the commentators to attach an intelligible meaning to these words. Let our reader try; and if he find a difficulty in making any sense of the passage, even with the advantage of their commentaries, then let him remember that the New Testament writers expected that the end of the world, and of the human race, was to be in the lifetime of Jesu's contemporaries. Hence they argued, if Jesus, the Messiah, had come one hundred years before our time, the world would, *ere now*, have been destroyed—the judgment would have come—the complement of the human race would have been made up, and we should have lost the glorious privilege of rational existence and Christian hope. Thus they thought that God had done well for them in postponing the coming of his Son till their day, because they felt assured that the end was at hand, and that in fifty years, at the most, this world would be surceased.

This doctrine of "the end" is prominent and conspicuous in the New Testament. Its being inculcated in the sacred volume is another proof, from holy writ itself, that neither in religion nor in any other subject does the Bible permit us to regard its teaching as infallible. It would be easy to multiply such proofs. They will—as they always have done—present them-

selves in abundance to the attentive reader of the Bible. Henceforward we entreat our reader not to shut his eyes against the truth of their existence—not to lay aside his reason—not to run the risk of corrupting his honest habits of thought, or weakening his powers of moral, intellectual, and spiritual discernment, by fencing with the verbal subtleties, by means of which it is attempted to "explain away" scriptural difficulties. If God had intended his blessed book to be infallible, surely He would not have left on its every page the mark of fallibility.

Besides, consider the arguments for the honesty of Scripture, which are derivable from those discrepancies and contradictions which show the entire absence of any thing like collusion among the sacred writers; and, again, consider the argument for the antiquity of Scripture from errors in the inspired volume, which mark the very age they come from. This error about "the end" is a strong evidence that all the New Testament books—except the second Epistle of Peter, of whose genuineness, every scholar knows, there have always been more or less reasonable doubts—that every other New Testament writing was composed within a few years after the destruction of Jerusalem, in A. D. 70. If the New Testament writers had composed their books long after the destruction of Jerusalem, would they not have been more reserved in expressing their belief that the end of the world was to be a near follower, if not a concomitant, of the overthrow of the Temple and the Holy City? If the New Testament books had been written early in the second century, or even very late in the first, would they not, like the second Epistle of Peter, have alluded to men's amazement at the delay in the coming of the Lord? Would they not have been engaged, as part of Peter's second letter is, with pleading for more time in order to the fulfilling of the promise? Thus, our opinions tend to strengthen the believer's trust in God and Christ and the Holy Ghost; for they tend to show

that the New Testament is a contemporaneous, honestly written record of the events to which it alludes; and, if the reader will only give a patient and thoughtful persual to the pages which are to follow, we are not without a hope that they may enable him more thankfully, piously, and intelligently to study both the Old and New Testaments.

E.—Paul's Argument in Cor. xv. 19, 32.

We shall only further illustrate this part of our subject by drawing attention to what we regard as a strongly marked case of mixed moral and religious error in the writings of one who was a vigorous upholder of Inspiration, and a bright example of its glorious effects. It is in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and in the midst of an elaborate discussion of a most solemn religious subject, the resurrection of the dead, that the Apostle to the Gentiles puts forth the notion, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, "we are of all men most miserable;" and "if, after "the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at "Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not? "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

Now, let it be gravely and piously asked, what do these passages state, and what do they teach? They state that, on the supposition of there being no compensation or reward in an after world, the persecuted life of a holy man—whose motto is, Overcome evil with good—is more unhappy than the existence of the most vicious or the most base, who escapes detection and flourishes in the sordid luxury of an unhallowed prosperity. They teach that, apart from the hope of reward and the dread of punishment, a life like that of Sardanapalus, or of Tiberius at Capreæ, is preferable to that of Paul. On these principles, men who, like the Sadducees, had no firm grasp of a belief in the

spirit-world, should have set themselves to gratify their animal desires and propensities, and would only have been carrying out the maxim which became them as rational beings who were to end their existence after a while ! But, surely, to do good and patiently to endure, being buffeted for it, must always, under all circumstances that can be conceived, be a nobler and a happier course for man, than to batten on the grossest enjoyment of vice, or to glide self-condemned and self-despised through life, amid the smiles of flatterers and the scorn of the discerning. And surely, too, Paul was no stranger to the satisfaction of being "fully persuaded in his own mind."—Paul could depict the present torment of an evil conscience, and he knew the bliss of a self-approving conscience. Surely Paul knew better than this, his hypothetical teaching. Surely he had not forgotten that the gain of a holy man, such as the Christian Paul himself was, was an hundredfold, in this life, whatever he had lost for truth and righteousness' sake, even though that gain were held in the midst of persecution. Paul assuredly knew, and habitually taught, better than this exceptional and conditional teaching which he wrote to the Corinthians. If, however, you persist in supposing, contrary to and in spite of all evidence, that Paul's moral and religious doctrine, when written, was always infallible, then you involve yourself in the painful position of being compelled to maintain that, in the absence of hope for a future world, the abominations of a pampered profanity are a wiser philosophy —if not a deeper piety—than bravely to endure affliction in the cause of such partial light and truth as man can see in this world. But, on the other hand, grant what all the history and all the science and much of the morality of the Bible do manifestly show—namely, that, even when holy men are under the purifying and exalting influence of the Spirit of God, they still are men, and therefore they and their writings still are fallible—grant this : and then, in

these mournful utterances of the Apostle, you only find that even he was well nigh overcome by evil, and for a moment was induced to write unadvisedly, when he laboured under the vexatious questioning, and opposed the worldly-minded unbelief and want of spirituality, of those lucre-loving Corinthians.

SECTION 2.—*The Conclusion, an Answer to the Question of this Book.*

GRANT this, we say ; but in making this, as we think, inevitable concession, and in remembering the very numerous and sometimes serious errors in Scripture, of which a few examples have been given in these pages, let us know that we are solving the problem proposed to us. Let us look on our position and see that, whatever else and however excellent may be the meaning of Inspiration, we are forced by the bearings of truth, as witnessed to by the Bible itself, to the conclusion, that neither with reference to Science, History, Morality, nor Religion, does the Bible permit us to regard its teaching as infallible, or free from all error.

BOOK II.

WHAT REASON IS THERE FOR EXPECTING THE BIBLE TO BE INFALLIBLE?

INTRODUCTION.

THE SELF-CONSISTENCY OF TRUTH, IN ITS BEARINGS ON THIS QUESTION.

HAVING, in the preceding pages of this Essay, recognised the untenableness of the popular belief that the Bible is, by its inspiration, guaranteed as an infallible book, let us now proceed to examine the grounds on which this erroneous dogma is maintained. Painful, indeed, will be our mental struggle, if, with the evidence of facts already laid before us as contradicting the notion of Biblical Infallibility, we shall discover that there is a strong array of countervailing testimony which goes in support of such infallibility; for the task must then be undertaken, of weighing the monstrously opposed masses of evidence, in order to decide for ourselves on which side the existence of truth is indicated by a preponderance. The unnatural question would then arise—Must we be guided by our senses and our reason, which show us Scriptural inaccuracies and self-contradictions, and thereby witness that Scripture is not infallible? or,—Must we bow to an overwhelming pressure of authority, and, even at the risk of stultifying reason and bidding defiance to the senses, must

we acknowledge an inaccurate and self-contradictory document to be infallible? Thus, if, on examination, we find the alleged proofs of inspirational infallibility to be at all as weighty as the evidence showing the presence of errors in the Bible is palpable, there must lie before us, indeed, an agonizing—a maddening—conflict between the pious inclination to submit to religious teaching, and the inevitable propensity to believe on conviction. If, on the other hand, however, the alleged proofs, which we are about to examine, should appear shadowy and unsubstantial, then our course of faith and of reason, with reference to Scriptural infallibility, will be plain.

Thus, it is impossible to avoid feeling that, as truth is always consistent with itself, and as one unmistakeable part of truth has already shown us, by the facts of the case, that the Bible is not infallible, we shall probably find that there exists no valid reason for the popular expectation of infallibility in the inspired volume. This feeling of anticipation, accompanied by a certain desire that we may be able to discover plainly the self-consistency of truth, with reference to our present subject, is unavoidable; but, whatever may be the result of our inquiry, it is assuredly our duty to scrutinize the proofs in question very closely, and with a pious care proportioned to the importance and improbability attaching to the conclusion in which they are supposed to involve us.

CHAPTER I.

EXAMINATION OF THE ARGUMENT FROM MIRACLES FOR INSPIRATIONAL INFALLIBILITY.

THE first point we shall examine is, the proof of inspirational infallibility, which, it is said, can be drawn from Miracles.

At the outset, it is clear that a writing which records the narratives of miraculous events is not thereby proved to be infallible. Those chronicles, for instance, which tell us of Dunstan's superhuman doings and sufferings, are not by any man supposed to be free from all admixture of error because they contain marvellous stories. Such chronicles may, indeed, be infallible; but, even to establish their credibility, they require all the more testimony, because they expect us to believe what is so unlike all that we have experienced. Just so, let us forget for a moment what we have seen in the former chapter, and suppose that the Biblemay be infallible. Still, its containing narratives of miracles does not prove its supposed infallibility, but rather renders an unusually great weight of testimony requisite, in order to establish the credibility of those narratives. It is not in this manner, however, that wise men endeavour to prove the Bible infallible, by an argument drawn from miracles. Their argument rather is, that the Scripture writers performed miracles: that no man can perform miracles, except the Spirit of God be with him: and that the presence of the Divine Spirit in a man, guarantees that man's writings as being wholly free from error. Hence, they deduce the inspirational infallibility of the Bible.

As to the first statement, that the Scripture-writers performed miracles, can we be quite sure that all the sacred penmen wrought such superhuman deeds as showed that God was with them? Who wrote the books of Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles,

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, and those of the Psalms which refer to the Babylonish captivity and other events of a far later date than David's reign? If we know not who wrote these books, how can we know that their authors worked miracles in proof of their divine and infallible inspiration? Or, again, if Mark and Luke, between them, wrote two of the four Gospels and the book of the Acts, what proof have we that either of those evangelists ever wrought one single miracle?

But let it be supposed, for the furtherance of our inquiry, that every sacred penman could be shown to have been a worker of miracles. Even this would not, according to the teaching of the Bible itself, demonstrate that God was with each penman; for the Bible admits that miracles, or superhuman deeds, may be effected not only by Divine aid, but even by the agency of the devil. So, when Pharaoh* called the wise men and sorcerers of Egypt, and they did with their enchantments in like manner as did Moses and Aaron, was it a good spirit, or an evil, which gave miraculous power to Jannes and Jambres whilst they withstood Moses?† Or, again, those false Christs‡ that were to "show "great signs and wonders," by whose inspiration had they their powers? The "man of sin,"§ too, is said to have had "his coming after the working of Satan, "with all power and signs and lying wonders;" and one of the symbolic "beasts,"‖ in the Apocalypse, is described as "doing great wonders, so that he maketh "fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight "of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth "by the means of those miracles which he hath power "to do:" and in like manner, also in the same book, the three symbolic frogs¶ are "the spirits of devils, "working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of "the earth and of the whole world."

Now, on the face of this Scriptural evidence, is it not

* Exodus vii. 11. † 2 Tim. iii. 8. ‡ Matt. xxiv. 24.
§ Thess. ii. 9. ‖ Rev. xiii. 13. ¶ Rev. xvi. 13.

abundantly clear that, according to the teaching of the Bible itself, miracles afford no proof that he who works them is assisted by the God of truth, and therefore can neither lie nor be in error?

Obviously, then, we must not rest on miracles as a proof of inspirational infallibility; for it does not appear that all the Scripture-writers exercised miraculous powers; and, even if this were quite an established point, it would only show, according to Scripture, that those writers were aided by *some* superhuman agency, either divine or diabolical.

CHAPTER II.

EXAMINATION OF THE ARGUMENT FROM PROPHECY FOR INSPIRATIONAL INFALLIBILITY.

THE next argument, which we shall consider, in favour of inspirational infallibility, is drawn from a subject akin to the miraculous, and is to be dealt with in a manner similar to that resorted to in the case of miracles. The prophecies which are contained in Holy Writ are referred to; and it is argued that no man can utter true and real* prophecies except the all-knowing Spirit of God inform his mind, or guide his pen. The Bible, it is further urged with much force, contains true and real prophecies; and, therefore, the authors of the Bible must have had their minds informed, or their pens guided, by the Holy Spirit: and, moreover, it is not conceivable that the Almighty should have permitted the recorders of his oracles to insert aught of their own errors in the same books in which they wrote the divine predictions. Hence a conclusion is drawn that the Bible is inspired and infallible.

* By a *true* prophecy, we mean one in accordance with a fulfilment; and by a *real* prophecy, we mean a prediction as opposed to a history

Now, here again, supposing the line of argument to be in itself allowable and satisfactory, is it certain that those Scripture-writers, whose very names are, for the most part, undiscoverable, were all of them men who originated true and real prophecies? Even in the case of the New Testament, Paul and John may have been genuine prophets; but what is there to make it probable that Matthew, Mark, Luke, James, Peter, or Jude, ever uttered a single real or true prophecy? But, again, let us assume, for the sake of our argument, that it could be shown that every Scripture-writer had enunciated at least one indisputably marvellous prophecy. What effect would this concession have as a proof of inspirational infallibility?

Scripture itself teaches that such prophecies may come from a source widely separated from the God of truth. For instance, it is the book of Deuteronomy* which tells us that a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, may arise and give Israel a sign, or a wonder, which shall come to pass; and yet the very object of that true phophetic sign may be to seduce Israel into the worship of false gods, so that it may become the bounden duty of the people, instead of hearkening to the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, to put him to death. Thus, it is manifest, that if every scripture-writer could be proved to have uttered prophecies which the course of history had verified, or was now verifying, this would of itself be no guarantee to the believing student of the Bible that any scripture-writer had not been a false, or a mistaken teacher.

But it is not only with a general principle bearing on this point that Scripture supplies us. Numerous instances present themselves in the sacred pages, of wicked prophets, who strove to mislead men into sin, and yet were the means of giving true prophecies. In the New Testament, the case of Caiaphas is conspicuous. The inspired narrative informs us, that in a

* Deut. xiii. 1—5

council, where the Pharisees were busy plotting against Jesus, Caiaphas used the words, "It is expe-"dient for us that one man should die for the people, "and that the whole nation perish not.". "This," says the same narrative, "he spake not of himself: but "being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus "should die for that nation." Here then was, according to St. John's gospel,* a marvellous and true prophecy uttered by Caiaphas at the very moment when he was wickedly conspiring against the harmless and admirable life of our blessed Lord. Who supposes that this true prophecy was a voucher for the infallibility of all that Caiaphas wrote or spoke? Similarly, if all the canonical writers were known to have been true prophets, that would not prove all their writings infallible.

The Old Testament, too, speaks of Balaam † as a prophet who foretold the coming of a star out of Jacob —the rising of a sceptre out of Israel—and the coming of one out of Jacob, who should have dominion. In these and similar forebodings, Balaam is represented, if not as foretelling the Messiah, at least as announcing, with a forecast of superhuman wisdom, the prevalence of Israel over Moab. Thus does the Old Testament describe Balaam as a true prophet; and, moreover, there is every thing to make it apparent that he, like Caiaphas, prophesied in the name of Jehovah, the true God. Yet it was at this very time that Balaam "loved "the wages of unrighteousness"‡ so that he "taught "Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children "of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to "commit fornication."§ Balaam may have been a true prophet; but who will say that his teaching was infallible, or free from all admixture of error?

And now, after noticing the prophets Caiaphas and Balaam, and after recognising the principle laid down

* John xi. 50—52. † Numbers xxiv. 17—19.
‡ 2 Peter ii. 15. § Rev. ii. 14.

in Deuteronomy, let us ask what reliance can be placed on the argument drawn from prophecy in support of inspirational infallibility. If each book of the Bible contained a true prophecy, first uttered by the writer of the book, even this would evidently be far from showing that each book was infallible.

CHAPTER III.

EXAMINATION OF THE ARGUMENT FROM THE AUTHORITY CLAIMED FOR SCRIPTURE BY THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS.

We now proceed to the most complicated and difficult part of our subject, the argument—namely, in favour of the Bible's infallibility, drawn from the authority claimed for Scripture by the writers of the New Testament.

At the outset, let us see what this argument really is. The New Testament writings are assumed to be infallible. The New Testament writings state, or imply, that the Old Testament writings are infallible. Thus it is, by some, supposed to be apparent that the whole Bible is infallible. Now even supposing that it can be shown that the New Testament does assert the infallibility of the Old Testament and of itself, what proof can be given that the New Testament is not mistaken in this very matter? To this it is commonly replied, that miracles, prophecies, and Jesu's promises of the Spirit of truth, guarantee the infallibility of the New Testament writings. But we have already seen that, on the showing of the Bible itself, miracles and prophecies utterly fail in proving the infallibility of their workers or enunciators; and in a subsequent part of this Book we shall take occasion to examine the promises of Christ which are said to bear on this point. In the meanwhile, let us here content ourselves with asking who guarantees the exact correctness with which these promises of Christ are recorded? The only possible answer is, the New Testament writers. Thus, then, the New Testament writers guarantee the infallible accuracy of their own

narration of Jesu's words of promise, and then those words of promise are supposed to guarantee the infallibility of the New Testament writings. If this be not arguing in a circle, we know no instance of that fallacy.

From these considerations it is clear that no weight can logically attach to the complicated argument, in favour of scriptural infallibility, which is drawn from the authority claimed for Scripture by the New Testament writers. It is as futile as if one should say *all* the Pope's utterances must be infallible, because *he himself claims* infallibility as attaching to *some* of his sentances. But, not to press this point, let us look closely into the argument in question. The infallibility, said to be claimed for Scripture by the New Testament, purports to be claimed either by the Jews, the disciples of Christ, or by Jesus himself.

A.—The Opinion of the Jews on this Subject.

In the case of the Jews what is to be said? Doubtless they did, for centuries *after* Christ, believe their Bible to be verbally inspired, and wholly infallible. To this testify the Masoretic diligence and exactness in counting and recording the number of scriptural books, words, letters, and even vowel points. And that this feeling prevailed among the people of Judæa, at least as early as our Saviour's time, is abundantly apparent from many passages in the gospel history. For instance, the chief priests and scribes at once fixed on Bethlehem as necessarily the birthplace of the Messiah; "for," said they, "thus it is written by the "prophet." The inspired seer, Micah, had so prescribed the will of God, and his writing—it was believed—could not err. Why not? Evidently because those priests and scribes partook of the prevailing national belief in the infallibility of Holy Writ.

B.—The Opinion of the Evangelists.

That the Evangelists, and indeed all the disciples of Christ, should hold this part of the Jewish creed, is what was naturally to be expected ; and, accordingly, the sympathy of the Evangelists in a reverence for the infallibility of the Old Testament is largely shown by their well-known formulary, "Now all this was done that" (*hina*—in order that) "it might be fulfilled which "was spoken of the Lord by the prophet."

Of course we do not regard the testimony of *the Jews* on this, or on any other subject, as a decisive and unquestionable authority : and the value at which the opinion of *the Evangelists* on this subject is to be taken, must depend on the evidence which can be produced in proof of their infallibility ; but the point to be noticed here is, that our Lord's four biographers had their own minds strongly impregnated with this current Jewish notion. In their judgment, it was a part of piety to regard the Old Testament Scriptures as the unerring dictates of Jehovah ; so that we can well understand how, in depicting an historical portraiture of Jesus, they would delight in every possible opportunity of recording expressions, in which that holy One seemed to countenance their own favorite preconception.

C.—Alleged Utterances of Jesus on this Subject.

With these remarks, and supposing, for the sake of our argument, that the four Gospels give us the "ipsissima verba" of our Lord, we proceed to enumerate and examine what we believe will be found to be fair and adequate specimens of the strongest declarations, in support of scriptural sanctity and authority, which Jesus is said to have uttered.

Matthew, for instance, tells us that, in Christ's sermon on the Mount,* the words occurred, "Till heaven "and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise "pass from the law till all be fulfilled;" and, again, the divine preacher is represented as saying, "I am "not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to "fulfil."

The same Evangelist tells us, how Jesus, rebuking the Jews for bidding defiance to the moral duty of filial kindness, said, "Thus have ye made the com- "mandment of God of none effect by your tradition."†

Similarly, too, in strong apparent support of inspirational infallibility, Jesus, arguing with the Jews as to the divine nature or the unique excellence of the Christ, asks them to explain how it is, if Messiah be David's merely ordinary human son, that "David *in* "*spirit* calls him Lord?"‡ Is it not here implied by Jesus that the inspired David could not err even in a word? Does not this saying of the Son of God prove even the *verbal* inspiration and infallibility of the Old Testament? And, again, is not that other passage, from the Gospel of John, another convincing proof that our blessed Saviour held what is commonly called the highest doctrine of verbal inspiration; when he replied to his Jewish accusers by reminding them, that it could hardly be blasphemy for him to "call himself "the Son of God," since it was written in their law (Psalm lxxxii. 6), "I said ye are gods." "If then," argues Jesus, "he called them gods unto whom the "word of God came, and *the Scripture cannot be broken*, "say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and "sent into the world, thou blasphemest because I said "I am the Son of God?"§ Do not these two texts plainly prove to every believer, that Jesus regarded the words of the Old Testament as infallibly inspired?

But, yet again, see how our Lord revered the words of the prophets. It was in the solemn night of his

* Matt. v. 18.
† Matt. xv. 6.
‡ Matt. xxii. 43.
§ John x. 35.

betrayal that he warned his apostles, saying,* "All "ye shall be offended because of me this night, *for it* "*is written* (Zech. xiii. 7), I shall smite the shepherd, "and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." And it was at the same awful period that Jesus spoke of his power to call down twelve legions of angels for his deliverance;† "but," he added "how then "*shall the Scriptures be fulfilled*, that thus it *must* be?" Do not these references to the prophets clearly indicate that, in the judgment of the Son of God, the Old Testament prophets spoke with an infallible prescience of the deepest mysteries of the divine will?

These six quotations are, we believe, an adequate representation of all which Jesus *is reported* to have said in support of Biblical infallibility. We have endeavoured to put them briefly, but yet with allthe argumentative force they can bear. Let us now examine them in detail.

The citation from the sermon on the Mount speaks of not a jot or a tittle of the law passing till all be fulfilled, and of Jesus as not being a destroyer but a fulfiller of the law.

We will at once concede what it would be hard to prove, viz., that "the law" here denotes the old Testament. One of the commands of that law (Exod. xxi. 24) is, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Now, in what manner does Jesus proceed to deal with this precept? Does he not say, "Ye have heard that it "hath been said, An eye for an eye, a tooth for a "tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil?" Does not Jesus abrogate this law of retaliation, and with it that other (Deut. xxiii. 6, 7) which permits, if it does not positively enjoin, the hating of an enemy? And, having abrogated these, does not our Lord substitute for them the truly golden law which bids men love their enemies?

Such abrogation, or, if you choose, such "fulfilment"

* Matt. xxvi. 32. † Matt. xxvi. 54.

as this, is reconcilable with Jesu's declaration, if that declaration be modified so as to mean that the Saviour was no hasty revolutionist but that his object was to promote the holiness and piety of men, even as the Jewish lawgiver had desired to do. Only, Jesus would pursue this object by giving a better and more perfect law than that of the Old Testament. To abrogate thus was indeed to fulfil; but it was a course wholly irreconcilable with the idea, that Jesus believed the Old Testament law infallible—that is, unmixed with error. To abrogate, or in any way to alter, that which is infallibly revealed by God, and infallibly recorded by man, must be to change it for the worse; and such a change the blessed Jesus, we are persuaded, never made in aught.

Thus, whatever else may or may not be the signification of those conservative words about fulfilling and not destroying the law, they manifestly do not inculcate the doctrine of inspirational infallibility.

As to the next passage, that bearing on the duties of children to their parents, is not the precept, "Honour thy father and thy mother," the commandment of God, in whatever book it be written? Nay, was it not so awfully the commandment of God, hundreds of years before the law is said to have been given from Sinai, that Ham, according to the sacred historian (Gen. ix. 20—27), brought the curse of God upon himself and all his progeny, by dishonou*ring* his father Noah? Surely, in whatever book it is *written* or not written, this duty of honour to parents *is* the commandment of God; but it is hard to see by what reasoning it can be shown that such a duty being written in a book, and being spoken of in that book as God's precept, can prove the whole book to have been infallibly inspired.

In noticing the way in which Jesus quoted the 82nd and the 110th Psalms, in arguments with the Jews, we should never forget that these citations occur in *arguments;* and not only so, but in hypothetical pro-

positions. In the case of the 82nd Psalm, Jesu's argument is, *If* you are right in saying that the Scripture cannot be broken, and *If* the Scripture call some men gods, with what justice can you accuse me of blasphemy, because I do something like that which your own sacred and, as you acknowledge, infallible writings represent God as not only permitting others to do, but as actually himself doing? Assuredly, here is no statement by our Lord that the Old Testament is infallible; but, without expressing his own view on this subject, he appeals to his countrymen on their own most hallowed convictions.

So, too, the 110th Psalm is only used conditionally. The argument in which it is referred to runs thus:—You say that your Scriptures teach you that Christ is to be David's son; and also you say that the inspired, and therefore, according to your notions, infallible David called him Lord. If Christ were to be merely an ordinary human son of David, how can you account for David, than whom you know of no greater man, calling him Lord? Must not this Lord of David's be something more than common humanity? Must he not be divine, or in some way a supereminently great man, if your idea of Scriptural infallibility is to be retained?

Here, again, Jesus appeals to the convictions of the Jews, without at all setting the seal of his divine approbation to those convictions, any more than Paul *approved* the worship of God as an "unknown" God, when he *used* that popular idea in order to convince and instruct the men of Athens. Before we leave this passage, however, we must notice that, in Luke's narrative of this same argument of Jesus with the Jews, there is a very marked and important variation of the phrase which our Saviour is said to have employed; for, whereas Matthew makes Jesus quote the 110th Psalm, as what "David *in spirit* wrote," Luke*

* Luke xx. 42.

merely represents Jesus an introducing the quotation with the words —"David *himself saith in the book of "Psalms."* Who shall tell us whether Matthew or Luke is, in this instance, the more exact in his version of what Jesus said? If the inspired Evangelist, Luke, be not incorrect, Matthew must be void of infallibility, for Luke, in this very important narrative, does not inform us that Jesus said any thing about David being "in spirit." If Luke be incorrect, what becomes of his inspirational infallibility when he wrote? On such slender bases rests the enormous dogma of scriptural infallibility.

The last sayings of our Lord's, which we are to examine in order to see their bearing on Biblical infallibility, are those in which the Gospel-writers describe him as teaching that "the Scriptures must be fulfilled;" that is, that the events of this life and death *must* take a certain form, in order to tally with the destiny which the writings of the Israelitish prophets had prescribed for him.

We are fresh from the perusal of texts from Matthew and Luke, which show how little we can be sure that, in the evangelical records, we have the precise and entire words of Christ. This consideration ought, if we have any love of truth, to weigh with us when we find difficult and improbable sayings put into the mouth of the wise and gentle Jesus by biographers who, we know, delighted in uttering such difficult and improbable sayings themselves. Is it not most likely that the evangelists, as they thought one inapplicable prophecy fulfilled by Jesus being called out of Egypt, and another, which has no existence, fulfilled by his dwelling at Nazareth, so also thought that Zachariah wrote about the Messiah and that what he so wrote *must* be fulfilled?

But some reader may ask, why call these sayings difficult and improbable? We call them so for at least two good reasons. If Jesus, whom we believe to have been the infallible Son of God, did use these

words as to the "must be" of what the prophets had written, then, indeed, a maddening puzzle would present itself to drive us into unbelief, when we found the infallible Jesus implying that a book was infallible which had in it palpable errors. This is one reason why we call every passage which ascribes to Jesus the idea of prophetic necessitarianism, difficult and improbable. Besides, Jesus cannot have been ignorant of the conditionality of all prophecy, as laid down by the prophets themselves. It was, surely, not without the knowledge of the Son of God that Jeremiah had written those words, which should be ever borne in mind by the students of prophecy,*—"At "what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and "concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, "and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I "have *pronounced*, turn from their evil, I will repent "of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at "what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and "concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if "it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, "then I will repent of the good, wherewith I *said* I "would benefit them." Nor, again, can we suppose it to have been unknown to Jesus that the inspired Ezekiel had laid down the same principle of prophetic interpretation as applicable to the case of individuals not less than to that of nations.† "When I shall *say* "to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he com-"mit iniquity he shall die for it:" and "when I *say* "unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; if he turn "from his sin, he shall not die, he shall surely live." Now, let us ask what these passages mean, if they do not mean that all prophecy—that relating to individuals not less than that relating to nations—is conditional? The answer to this question must acknowledge, that no divinely inspired prophecy binds man by an inevitable, iron destiny, so that, if the prophet of the

* Jeremiah xviii. 7—10. † Ezekiel xxxiii. 13—15.

Lord has denounced him, he *must* be cursed ; and, if the seer has blessed him, he must be blessed. Rather the teaching of Holy Writ, and of our hearts, is, that the most terrible denunciations are intended, in God's mercy to stimulate man's repentance ; and the richest prophetic blessings are announced as an encouragement to human effort. With a consciousness of these prophetic principles, so clearly enunciated by the prophets themselves, and so constantly illustrated by the histories of David and his descendants, by the narrative of Ahab's repentance and the consequent postponement of God's curse upon him, by Jonah's dealings with Nineveh, and by numberless other pages of the Old Testament; with a consciousness of these principles, and their ever-recurring fulfilment, it is impossible to suppose that Jesus believed or thought that there was a "must be" in the particular manner of his death for us. Did some texts inevitably destine Judas to be a traitor? Did others compel the apostles to flee and leave their Master in his peril? Did others necessitate the hateful injustice of the Jews who accused Christ? and did yet another set of predictions bind the Romans to condemn and crucify that just man? If so, and if this was so spoken and so meant by our Lord, then he cannot have thought the Old Testament infallible, for he must have known that the prophecies declared themselves to be conditional ; and so, if he believed that they were truly inevitable, he must have known that they had erred in pronouncing themselves conditional. Thus, whether we have the precise words of Jesus on the subject of prophetic necessitarianism or not, these passages, which profess to give us his precise words on that subject, can afford no proof of Scriptural infallibility : for, either they unintentionally misrepresent what Jesus said, and so are themselves an instance in proof of Biblical infallibility ; or, else, they correctly state Jesu's words and views, and, on this supposition, the Lord himself contradicts, and so charges fallibility on, the prophets

for having declared their own forebodings to be conditional when, indeed, they were inevitable.

We have now examined six of the strongest and most varied instances we can find, in which Jesus is alleged to have attributed infallibility to the Scriptures. The argument drawn from this source seems to us wholly unsatisfactory. Jesus, doubtless, revered the marvellous and holy Bible of his nation: he, doubtless, used it to persuade and convince the Jews, to whom he addressed himself. Knowing the sanctity and authority which the Lord attached to the law and the prophets, the disciples, who so long and so entirely failed in understanding the nature of Messiah's kingdom, were easily betrayed into the idea that Jesus shared their own superstitious belief in Biblical infallibility; and thus they represented Him as using some expressions which, apart from the other evidence of the case, might lead us to suppose that the infallible Jesus sanctioned a belief in inspirational infallibility: but, viewed in connexion with the particulars we have just been laying before the reader, even these alleged sayings of our Lord have no weight as proof—indeed, on every conceivable hypothesis, they operate in direct disproof of the dogma of Scriptural infallibility.

Whether Paul, or Peter, or any others of the New Testament writers, do or do not attribute infallibility to the Bible, the infallibility of these New Testament writers must first be established, before their dictum can justify us in assenting to a dogma which is contravened by numerous and palpable matters of fact.

In a word, however much authority may be duly attachable to the Old Testament, and may be attributed to it in the New Testament, Infallibility is quite a different thing from authority; and the infallibility of the Old Testament we hold to be neither proven nor provable from the New Testament. Neither proven nor provable, we say; because, if we have not the exact sayings of Jesus, the New Testament is at fault, for it fails to give us an exact record of what it

professes to narrate precisely; and, on the other hand, if we have the exact sayings of Jesus, they must be so interpreted as to contradict and charge error on those who laid down the prophetic canon of conditionality. And again we say, neither proven nor provable, because, at best, we have as yet no sufficient reason for believing the New Testament infallible; and, until its infallibility is established, its assertions of opinion, by whomsoever professing to have been uttered, will not suffice to prove the infallibility of the Old Testament.

A point which naturally connects itself with this part of our argument is the scriptural use of the phrase, "the Word of God." This phrase is manifestly often employed to designate Our Saviour; but it is also sometimes used to denote certain portions of Holy Writ: and the too common English understanding of the phrase is undoubtedly as a synonym for the Bible. Now, supposing it to be granted that the Bible does call itself the Word of God, and supposing it further granted that the Bible thus claims infallibility for itself by this phrase, this would evidently be the same kind of proof of inspirational infallibility as is afforded by the Pope when he *calls himself* the Vicar of Christ and means to prove *by that title* that he is as infallible as we believe our Lord to have been. Thus this argument for scriptural infallibility is worthless even on the most favourable supposition. It may be interesting, however, to some of our readers to know, that the learned are by no means agreed that the term "Word "of God," is ever once used in Scripture as a designation of the Bible. Thus, for instance, a Professor, whose candour and learning show themselves to be equally admirable, lately used these words in preaching before the University of Cambridge—"Let not the "natural metaphor, by which men call a sacred record "'the Word of God,' ever blind us to the fact, that no "text has been found from Genesis to Revelation, in "which this holy name is made a synonym for the

" entire volume of Scripture."—(*Rational Godliness*, by Rev. Rowland Williams, B. D., p, 298.)

With this statement of a fact we perfectly agree: and, at the same time, we believe that "the Word of "God" is a name often applied to several *portions* of our Bible. But does this make it probable that even the portions so designated are infallible? Take the parallel expression, "Man of God," as it occurs in the Sacred Volume. Do we ever dream of asserting that Moses,* or Elijah,† or Shemiah,‡ or the Prophet of Judah,§ were infallible or impeccable because they and many others are styled in Scripture "Men of God?" We do not doubt whether Adam or any of his descendants were the work of God's hands; and yet we believe our first father and all men since—him only excepted, in whom the Spirit of God dwelt without measure—to have been both fallible and peccable. If *works of God* and "*Men of God*" may be fallible, how does the name "*Word of God*," applied to portions of a book written by the instrumentality of man, show us that even those very portions of that book are infallible? This notion is obviously as untenable as those we have already examined and been compelled to reject.

An arduous—we believe an impossible—task it will be for any pious mind to prove the infallibility of the Bible by the manner in which portions of that book are styled "*the Word of God*," or by our Saviour's references to the Old Testament; but, after all, if the task should seem to be performed, its accomplisher will only have argued in a circle, and thereby have wrought a chain of sand. The Old and New Testaments have sometimes been compared to a work in two volumes. How would it be with such a work, if we should assert its infallibility, and, in proof of our assertion, should urge that the second volume told us

* Deut. xxxiii. 1.
† 1 Kings, xvii. 24.
‡ 1 Kings xii. 22
§ 1 Kings xiii. 1.

its own writer was likely to be infallible, and that the writer of the first volume was certainly infallible? There would manifestly be no logical cogency whatever in this line of argument. What greater cogency belongs to the defence of Scriptural infallibility which we have just been examining?

CHAPTER IV.

ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF INSPIRATIONAL INFALLIBILITY, FROM THE SUPPOSED IMPOSSIBILITY OF SCRIPTURE WRITERS ASCERTAINING, BY NATURAL MEANS, MANY PARTICULARS OF WHICH THEY TREAT.

ANOTHER reason for believing in inspirational infallibility, is sometimes based on the acknowledgment which is regarded as the only possible reply to the question—How, but by Divine illumination, were the sacred penmen enabled to describe scenes of which it is highly improbable, and sometimes impossible, that they should have been witnesses? How, for instance, did Matthew and Luke arrive at a knowledge of the angelic visits and revelations to Elizabeth and her cousin Mary? Or, how did Moses describe the process of creation, most of whose parts were older than man? Some argue that an account of all which Adam knew was handed down to Moses by the probably oral tradition of the several long-lived patriarchs who intervened. But, even on this supposition, how did Adam or Moses learn the mystery of the first five days' work? The common answer is, that wisdom and knowledge for ascertaining all things which they could not know of themselves, but which they have recorded, were miraculously given to the holy men of old by inspiration; and then it is urged—Was it probable that God should condescend to reveal these secrets to Moses, and yet that he should leave Moses free to make all manner of natural mistakes in recording this and other revelations which were given to him by the Spirit of God?

Asfar as the *a priori* probability of a revelation, and no infallible record of it, is mixed up with this argument for inspirational infallibility, we shall deal with it under the general head of the *a priori* argument. At present our aim is, merely to show that an answer

widely different from that already alluded to can be given to the question—How, but by Divine inspiration, could mysteries like the history of creation be known to the Bible writers?

A.—Evangelists recording Scenes at which They were not Present.

And first, with reference to the Gospels—How were Matthew, and Luke, and the other evangelists, able to record speeches and conversations at which it is not pretended that they were present? There are obviously two conceivable modes in which they may have been provided with materials for their narrative. On the one hand, it is quite possible that by a miracle, or supernatural exertion of his almighty power, God may have taught the sacred penmen any secrets of the past which were known only to him. On the other hand, it is possible that the Bible writers may, like Livy or Herodotus, or any other ancient historian, have gathered their information from the traditions, oral or written, which were current either in the popular mind or in the literature of their day.

By which of these two modes did the inspired writers gain their information? The variations and discrepancies which occur in the accounts of what was said by Jesus, or those around him, lead us to the supposition that human tradition, and not Divine dictation, was the source from which the evangelists, at all events, draw their information. But this supposition becomes a certainty, in our minds, when we find Luke, at least, informing his reader whence he drew the materials of his gospel. "Forasmuch," says he (Luke i. 1—4), "as "many have taken in hand to set forth in order a de- "claration of those things which are most fully believed "among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who "from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers

"of the Word, it *hath seemed good to me also*, having "carefully traced out all things from the very first, to "write them for thee, Theophilus, seriatim, in order "that thou mightest know the certainty of those things "wherein thou hast been instructed."

On looking at this preface of Luke's history, there are several reflections which must arise in every thoughtful mind. For example, Luke's writing at all was a matter of "seeming good," or of human judgment as to what was desirable; and this does not look like the urgent duty of recording what God was miraculously teaching. Luke's mode of preparing himself for his task as a writer, was the natural one adopted by every prudent and honest author. He traced or followed our (*parekolouthekoti*, which is less correctly translated, "having had understanding") the several events of the history he was to write. He chose the best accredited portions of the current narrative. His informants, like the informants of all his contemporaries, were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word. He says not a syllable of his having any other *special* source of information. He makes no reference to any instruction which had been miraculously given to his companion Paul, and so transferred to him. He claims no inspirational infallibility. Yet, as he wished Theophilus to know the certainty of those things in which he (Theophilus) had been instructed, would not the Evangelist, as a prudent man, have said, if he believed it, You may depend on the certainty of what I tell you, for I write, not on the information of men only, but under the infallible dictation of the Spirit of God? That Luke should have omitted this source of his historical and religious knowledge, and named the other, is a kind of imprudence of which wise men will be slow to suspect such a writer as Luke has proved himself to be.

Similarly, in John's Gospel (John xx. 30, 31, and xxi. 24, 25), in passages where you would expect the sanction of an infallible inspiration to be named, if it

were true, you find no allusion to any such idea; but some early Christians, who wished to remind the reader on how high an authority this narrative of the Life of our Saviour rests, have appended to its last chapter the words, "this" (probably John) "is the disciple "which *testifieth* these things, and we" (of course, this "we" could not be John himself only) "know that his "*testimony* is true." Would not these corroborators of the fourth Gospel have been glad if they could, with a good conscience, have said that this gospel rested, not only on the human testimony of a loving eyewitness, but that it had been infallibly written by the beloved disciple under the especial guidance of the Holy Ghost? The omissions of all reference to such a sanction in this part of John's Gospel, and in Luke's preface, can only be accounted for on the supposition, that Luke himself, and some of John's earliest and most admiring readers, had no idea that inspiration made an inspired person or his writing infallible. Thus, then, we conclude that these two Evangelists, and, like them, all the other New Testament writers, never dreamt of infallibility attaching to their books—never dreamt of the Spirit of God dictating their sentences; but knew well, as one of them has said, that they carefully and honestly obtained the best information they could, and then piously employed the knowledge they had acquired.

B—Genesis describing Creation antecedent to Man's Existence.

But, for the Old Testament writers, how did they obtain their materials? If the Almighty had seen fit to reveal to Moses, or any one else, the history of creation before man's time, of course He could have made such a revelation, and He could thus have miraculously given knowledge to the author of the book of Genesis. We

do not question the possibility of God's doing any thing good ; but we are not prepared to believe this or any other miracle without some strong grounds of reason. And when we come to look at the alleged proofs that God did thus miraculously tell the writer of Genesis about the days which had gone by, we find that there is no probability whatever in favour of such an idea. There is not one contemporary assertion, that the *writer* of the Pentateuch obtained his materials by miraculous divine intervention. Moses, we are told, received the Law miraculously on Mount Sinai. The Commandments were divinely written on two tables of stone. A pattern of the tabernacle was shown Moses during his forty days' sojourn on the Mount. But who wrote the whole history of the Pentateuch? How comes it that the two copies of the fourth commandment do not tally? They cannot both have been exact copies from the tables of stone. If Moses wrote the Pentateuch, how is it that the death of Moses is recorded in that volume? Unless the Pentateuch was composed after the beginning of Saul's reign, how is it that we have, not only regulations for Israel as a kingdom in Deut. xvii. 14—20, but even the words (in Gen. xxxvi. 31), "these are the kings "that reigned in the land of Edom, *before there reigned* "*any king over the children of Israel*," words which a recent critic has not unjustly called "an historical "allusion to the kings of Israel?" We are fully persuaded that many of the words of Moses, and many precepts which Moses learned from Jehovah, are in the Pentateuch ; but why may not these instructions of Moses, together with any other extant ancient Jewish literature, have been compiled by some unknown writer during the time of the kings? Are we warranted, by any sufficient evidence, in the belief that Joshua and Ezra introduced many additions or alterations into the Pentateuch, but that Moses wrote the greatest part of that sacred volume? The only evidence to support that belief is the vaguest Jewish

tradition of a comparatively recent date. But, again, the question recurs, how could the author of the Pentateuch, whoever he was, have known such mysteries as the history of creation without a distinct revelation from heaven? To this we reply that, from whatever source the various histories in Genesis may have been *originally* derived, it is quite clear that the author of the Pentateuch compiled his narrative from sundry older manuscripts of which he had gained possession. A tolerably unquestionable proof of this point, which rests on grounds as strong as can support any result of critical investigation, may be seen by the reader in Theodore Parker's English version of De Wette's Introduction to the Bible.

At present we can only suggest to our reader the mode in which this point is established. It is observed that although the names Jehovah (translated "Lord"), and Elohim (translated "God"), and Jehovah Elohim (translated "Lord God"), are sometimes used, to all appearance, promiscuously in thePentateuch; yet there are to be found, especially in Genesis, long paragraphs in which the Diety is designated throughout by one, and only one, of these names. Thus there are whole chapters where Elohim ("God") is spoken of, and Jehovah ("Lord") is not mentioned. And, again, there are whole chapters where the Diety is named as Jehovah ("Lord"), and is not once styled Elohim ("God"). Passages of the former kind are described by Hebrew scholars as "Elohistic," to distinguish them from the writings of the latter kind, which are known as "Jehovistic."

It is remarkable that the Elohistic passages by themselves form a tolerably connected narrative, and the Jehovistic likewise by themselves. And, moreover, it is found that there are often, in Genesis, duplicate narratives of the same event, of which one narrative is Jehovistic and the other Elohistic. The English reader may readily test this matter for himself in such cases as the following:—

He will observe that one account of the creation is contained in the first chapter and in the first three verses of the second chapter of Genesis. Throughout all this passage, he will find that "God" (in the Hebrew, Elohim) is the name for the Deity. But from the fourth verse of Gen. ii. down to the end of the chapter, the term "Lord God" (in the Hebrew, Jehovah Elohim) is uniformly employed to denote the Creator; and in all this passage we are furnished with an account of the creation, in many respects widely different from that contained in the first thirty-four verses of the book of Genesis.

Similarly, a great part of the history of the deluge is written in duplicate, with discrepancies between the two narratives. Let the reader compare, for instance, the Elohistic section in Gen. vi. 9—22, with the parallel Jehovistic section in Gen. vii. 1—5.

Now, we put it to the English reader whether it is not highly probable—to the careful and candid Hebrew scholar whether it is not convincingly apparent—that the Pentateuch, instead of being written under the miraculous dictation of God, was compiled by some unknown author during the times of the Jewish monarchy, out of materials Jehovistic, Elohistic, Jehov-Elohistic, and Mosaic. How these materials originated, except to a slight extent in the case of Moses, we have no information; but that the mysterious account of the Creation was derived directly from God is now as improbable as any thing can be, when we see that it is given in duplicate, with variations, in the first four chapters of Genesis; and that, instead of both coming from Moses, these two narratives have all the appearance of having been originally written by unknown authors at different periods, and of having been ultimately compiled, five hundred years after the epoch of Moses, by some third writer, whose name is wholly unknown to us.

Thus, then, for the Gospels and for the Old Testament, there is every probability that the current

traditions and literature of the several periods, supplied the sacred penmen with those portions of their histories which seem, at the first glance, the least within reach of human inquiry or ingenuity; so little must we rely on the absence of all natural source of information as a proof of inspirational infallibility.

CHAPTER V.

ARGUMENT FOR INSPIRATIONAL INFALLIBILITY FROM THE EXCELLENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF HOLY WRIT.

We pass on to consider a fifth argument which is employed to prove the inspiration and so the infallibility of the Bible. The Scriptures, it is truly urged, have shown themselves of great excellence and power. They have made modern civilisation what Athens and the ancient world could never make it. On the revival of literature they purified society wherever the progress of the Reformation caused men to possess and read an open Bible; while the re-discovered lore of Greece and Rome did not succeed in giving holiness, or even peace and virtue, to Florence, Rome, and Spain, because in those countries priestcraft succeeded in withholding the Bible from the people. The Scriptures, lovingly preached, have converted New Zealand from a haunt of cannibalism into a land of bounteous and intelligent industry. In these, and many other instances which cannot be gainsaid, the power and excellence of the Bible are abundantly shown; and then it is argued that the book, which has done and is doing so much good, must be from God, and therefore infallible.

Now, that the Bible is (like every other good and perfect gift) from the Father of lights, we readily and most thankfully acknowledge—yea, we hope presently to show reasons for believing that the Bible is pre-eminently God's gift; but we cannot see how this and its power and excellence show it to be infallible.

A well-written treatise on vaccination would be a blessed boon from heaven to a people afflicted with the smallpox; but, surely, neither its being God's gift, nor its excellence and power, would prove such a book to be infallible, or free from all error. Or, again, the force and excellence of an hydraulic engine

are undeniable; and no pious mind will refuse to acknowledge that it was by God's gift to man that such an agency was invented; but who would dream of saying that the inventor of that agency, or any treatise in which he set forth—God helping him—his powerful and beneficent secret, was infallible? So, in the case of the Bible, thankfully do we acknowledge its divine origin, its excellence, and its power; but we are not prepared to say that its infallibility is thereby proved. Infallible it *may* be; but, surely, excellence and power, which show that their possessor is from God, do not show that their possessor is infallible. Indeed, this argument for inspirational infallibility is so transparently worthless, that an intelligent man would only resort to it in defence of a hopeless cause.

But it may be said that the excellence of the Bible is moral and religious, and that this kind of excellence, being loftier and more akin to the goodness which our minds compel us to attribute to the Deity, proves that its originator, and, in a sense, the book which inculcates it, are divinely and emphatically inspired. To this argument, fairly applied to all teachers and books which inculcate a surpassingly pure morality and purifying religion, we are so far from objecting that we recognize and glory in its cogency. But, if it be urged that the morality and religion of the Bible contrast so wonderfully with the degraded condition of morality and religion in all men except the writers of Scripture; and, if on this ground it be argued that the sacred penmen could only have known and written such morality and such religion by the aid of an inspiration which made them or their books infallible, then we wholly deny the force of such an argument for inspirational infallibility; and, in support of our denial, we point to the case of Socrates. Look at the morality and religion of that heathen man. See the confidence the dying Socrates had in God, in the Divine goodness, and in

the purity and bliss of the future world, where, in the presence of the same gods whom he had adored on earth, he hoped to meet and again enjoy the society of all the departed souls of the good. We are far from saying that this morality and this religion are equal in degree to that of the gospel. But we say, look at the purity of this teaching, and contrast it with the hideously base immorality, and with the degrading superstitions of the society in which Plato wrote and Socrates lived, and then tell us, if comparative moral excellence prove the Bible inspired so as to be infallible, why the same consideration should not prove the writings of Plato or of Socrates also infallibly inspired. Until we are better informed on this subject, we shall continue to hold it most true that excellence in any particular—physical, moral, or religious—is an effect of God's mercy and goodness, and a proof of his beneficent presence and co-operation; but, at the same time, we shall persist in believing that excellence and power are wholly different from, and of themselves by no means imply, the presence of *infallibility*.

CHAPTER VI.

ARGUMENT FOR INSPIRATIONAL INFALLIBILITY FROM SCRIPTURAL CANONICITY.

We shall next examine the argument in support of Scriptural infallibility which is derived from the Canonicity of Scripture. This plea for infallibility is of constant use, among the people, as well as among theologians. If one be asked, Why do you believe that woman was made out of man's rib? the answer is, Because the Bible, or the book of books. the greatest of all books, which is my rule (canon) of faith, tells me so. How constantly do men assume that such and such a statement cannot be erroneous, because it rests on the authority of the Bible! Well, but let us inquire what gives the Bible such unerring or infallible authority? Some men tell you its inspiration; others tell you its canonicity. Some say inspiration proves any book to be canonical; and, with the next breath, they proceed to assert that canonicity proves any book to be inspired. We deal at present, however, with those who more consistently maintain that the canonicity of any writing, or its having been admitted as one of the books of the Bible, proves its inspiration, and by consequence, as is supposed, its infallibility.

This argument goes on the supposition, that we are certainly assured that great skill and care were exercised, in discerning between inspired and uninspired compositions, before any work was admitted by the Jews into their Old Testament, or by the Christians into their New Testament.

A.—The Old Testament Canon and the Apocrypha.

Now, with regard to the Old Testament, what do we know of the reception of any of its books into the Jewish Bible? Who can tell us why Judges, or Esther, or Canticles, are considered canonical Books? Who can show reason why the Book of the Wars of the Lord,* the Book of the manner of the Kingdom,† which Samuel wrote and laid up before the Lord, and at least thirteen other Books,‡ which are referred to in Scripture as writings of more or less sacred authority, are not found in the Canon of the Jewish Bible?

And, on the other hand, there are books called apocryphal, like the Wisdom of the son of Sirach, which contain, confessedly, much useful and devout instruction, and which have been, from a period of very early Christian antiquity, quoted by ecclesiastical writers of various schools, with little or no less reverence than

* Numbers xxi. 14. † 1 Sam. x. 25.

‡ 1. The Book of Jasher, *vide* Joshua x. 12; 2 Sam. i. 18.
2. Solomon's Proverbs, Songs, and Natural History, *vide* 2 Kings iv. 32, 33.
3. The Acts of Solomon, *vide* 1 Kings xi. 41.
4. Chronicles of Israel, *vide* 1 Kings xiv. 19; xvi. 5, 20, 27; &c.
5. Chronicles of Judah, *vide* 1 Kings xv. 7.
6. The Books of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, *vide* 1 Chron. xxix. 29.
7. A copious Life of Solomon, by Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo, *vide* 2 Chron. ix. 29.
8. Acts of Rehoboam, *vide* 2 Chron. xii. 15.
9. Life of Uzziah, *vide* 2 Chron. xxvi. 22.
10. The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah, *vide* 2 Chron. xxviii. 26; xxxv. 27; xxxvi. 8.
11. The Book of Jehu, *vide* 2 Chron. xx. 34.
12. Life of Hezekiah by Isaiah, *vide* 2 Chron. xxxii. 32.
13. Life of Manasseh, in the Book of the Kings of Israel, *vide* 2 Chron. xxxiii. 18.

These and other sacred but lost, or not canonical, books are enumerated in treatises on the Old Testament Canon; *e. g.*, Moses Stuar pp. 159—171.

those of our Canonical Scriptures. What valid reason can be assigned for these Apochryphal Books being excluded from the Old Testament?

It is known to us all, that many of the early Christian writers made citations from the Apocrypha just in the same manner as they did from the Old and New Testaments? Do we know that the English Reformers were content to designate some at least of the Apocrypha as "the saying of Almighty God by "the Wise Man,"* and as the "Scriptures?" Do we all of us consider that these superlative titles are to this day more or less sanctioned, in the established church of England, as designating the Apocrypha, as is evident from their occurring in the Book of Homilies, which every clergyman is directed to read to his congregation on any occasion when it may be right to preach, and he may not be provided with a sermon of his own? Thus, notwithstanding the marked disrespect of some modern theoloigans for the Apocryphal writings, the early Christians, many of our Reformers, and the standard Homilists of the English Church, have no very clearly marked boundary line between the Apocrypha and the Canonical writings; and it is from this sufficiently clear, that the so-called Christian fathers, many of the Reformers, and the authorities of the English Episcopal Church, could not recognize any weight as attaching to the argument that the canonicity of any writing establishes its inspirational infallibility; for all these parties—if they did not entertain very distinct or satisfactory views regarding Inspiration—yet well knew the difficulties in which the whole subject of the Canon is enveloped, and that it rather needs support and elucidation for itself than is able to prove, or to uphold, any theory of Inspiration.

But, moreover, if, from what Christians have thought about the canon as bearing upon inspiration, we turn to the history of the canon itself, we shall find such gloomy

* Homilies, pp. 65, 90. (*Oxf. Edit.* 1844.)

obscurity covering this whole subject, that we shall be compelled—however unwillingly—to own that inspirational infallibility must rest on some better support than the canonicity of Scripture, or it will not be maintainable at all. For the Old Testament the case stands thus:—From Genesis to Malachi, we hardly know who *wrote* one book. We know nothing as to the reasons for which, or the person by whom, any book was admitted into the Hebrew Scriptures. The tradition, that Ezra settled the canon, rests on no contemporaneous history; and, if it did, we are not supplied with any information as to the criteria upon which Ezra proceeded—whether he canonized all the then extant portions of Hebrew literature, which would account for books having a place in the Old Testament which never mention God or piety; or, whether he rejected some parts of his national literature, and only canonized books of some certain quality or character.

The earliest positive information we have about the Jewish canon is as late as B.C. 160, and is found in the preface to the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus. This information merely goes so far as to tell us, that, besides the law and the prophets, there had been other writers who had followed their steps, and had composed Hebrew books of learning and wisdom. Among these—and apparently considered quite on a par with them—was Jesus, the grandfather of Sirachides, of whose book of Ecclesiasticus his grandson apologizes for giving a Greek translation which, as a translation, must of necessity be inferior to the original Hebrew. These words of Sirachides manifestly suggest a very comprehensive theory for the formation of the canon; for they admit at least one apocryphal work into the Jewish Bible, and they are far from making that a final admission.

Our next informant is Josephus, who speaks of three classes of Hebrew canonical Scriptures: first, the five books of Moses: secondly, the thirteen books of the prophets, whose writings extend from the time of Moses

to the reign of Artaxerxes; and thirdly, four books which contain hymns to God and rules of life for men.* Josephus then adds—"From the time of Artaxerxes, "moreover, till the present period, all occurrences have "been written down; but they are not regarded as "entitled to the like credit with those which precede "them, because there was no certain succession of pro-"phets." So then Josephus makes the Jewish canon depend on a "certain succession of prophets;" and yet he owns that, for about 400 years before his own time, such a succession had failed. During all that interval, who guarded the sacred writings from corruption? And is it not manifest that, subsequently to the days of Joshua, and prior to the time of Samuel, there had similarly been no "certain succession of prophets?" Besides, even after Samuel, during the 500 years before the Babylonish captivity, when we know there were *occasionally* great prophets arising, what security can we have that there was a certain and unbroken succession of prophets? At all events, no such prophetical succession, with charge over the canon and the sacred writings, is alluded to in the Bible.

It is not a little observable that neither Sirachides nor Josephus furnish us with any catalogue of the Jewish Scriptures; and Philo-Judæus, our next informant, leaves us still more in the dark as to what he knew or even thought of the canon. Indeed, it is not till nearly 200 years after Christ, that Melito, the Christian Bishop of Sardis, gives us a somewhat detailed list of the books which in his time were regarded as constituting the Hebrew canon. Melito's list is remarkable as omitting the Book of Esther, and as apparently including a book called the Wisdom of Solomon. About the middle of the third century, Origen, as quoted by Eusebius towards the middle of the fourth century, gives the second list of Old Testament books which has reached us. This catalogue is

* Joseph. cont. Ap. i. 8.

remarkable, as first stating that there were twenty-two books in the Hebrew Bible, then enumerating only twenty-one books, and then adding (as it were to make up the twenty-second volume) "*besides these*" (exo touton) "there are the Maccabaical writings." As the volume of the twelve lesser prophets is not enumerated in Origen's list, we may either suppose that transcribers have dropped this which was his twenty-second volume, or we may suppose (which seems far more probable) that Origen purposely groups the twelve minor prophets with some, if not all the Apocrypha, and then gives the general term Maccabaic writings to this twenty-second volume which he attaches to the other twenty-one by the expression "besides these." It is Eusebius, in his history written as we have said in the fourth century after Christ, who gives us these catalogues from Melito and Origen.

From the beginning of the fourth century there is no lack of Old Testament catalogues. They manifest such slight deviations from one another, and from our present received Old Testament canon, as show that the Christians of those days were not prepared to give any very exact or unanimous account of this matter.

There is thus sufficient evidence to make it moderately probable, that our Old Testament tallies in the main with the ancient *Hebrew* canon; but, when men begin to prove so stupendous a miracle as the infallibility of Holy Writ by its canonicity, there is every thing to make us feel that the case for the Canon is scarcely able to stand erect and support its own weight, and that it is wholly incompetent to bear such a superstructure as that of inspirational infallibility. See, for instance, the way in which the subject of the Canon is confused, and the satisfactoriness of our common notions on that subject is shaken, by the fact that the Alexandrian Jews used a Greek translation of the Old Testament, which we still possess, and which we call the Septuagint; that this Septuagint is the book from which nearly all quotations are adduced

in the New Testament; and that this Septuagint, or Alexandrian Old Testament, included Ecclesiasticus and many other books which we style apocryphal. Or, again, when it is attempted to deduce such a consequence as infallibility from canonicity, we should remember that Melito and Origen (from A.D. 170 to A.D. 230) furnish the first extant catalogues of the Old Testament scriptures, and that these catalogues are far from being exact in their agreement.

Thus the canonicity of the Old Testament will hardly prove its inspiration or its infallibility.

B.—The New Testament Canon.

If we look to the case of the New Testament, we find that the Apostolic fathers generally quote sayings of Jesus as such, without professing to extract them from any of our canonical writings. This they do just in the same way as Paul quotes the saying of our Lord, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."* Indeed it is evident that, in the first Christian century, what Luke says in his preface was strictly true, that "Many "had taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration "of those things which were most surely believed "among" the Christians; and there is every appearance which can make it probable that from these numerous and uncanonical Gospels the very earliest extant Christian writings make their quotations at least as readily and frequently as from any of our canonical New Testament books.

When the four Gospels were written, or when they first received a degree of general reverence that was conceded to no other biographies of Jesus, we cannot exactly say; but there is much ground for believing that this did not take place in the first century of our

* Acts xx. 35.

era; and, on the other hand, it is probable that, by the middle of the second century (that is by A.D. 150), the four Gospels and the greater and more important portion of the Epistolary Scriptures were held in the very highest estimation. This appears from the works of Justin Martyr, Tatian, and others who wrote in the second half of the second century, as compared with the more genuine compositions of the Apostolic Fathers, who wrote towards the end of the first century. But now, if we come to inquire what criteria guided the minds of the early Christians in the exclusion or admission of books into the Canon, all seems dark and unsatisfactory. Why four gospels and only four were regarded as canonical, we know not, unless, indeed, any man can make up his mind to rely upon such fantastic reasons as are given by one of the Fathers, who tells us there were four gospels because there are four quarters in heaven whence the winds come, and because, in Ezekiel's vision (Ezek. i. 4—10), the "living creatures" had four "likenesses of their faces," viz., a man supposed to represent Matthew, a lion representing John, an ox symbolic of Luke, and an eagle typifying Mark.—*Iren. adv. Hœres.* iii. 11.

That Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, wrote the compositions attributed to them, we believe merely because those compositions bear their names, which is but little proof, when it is remembered that, early in the history of the Church, it was held to be no fault, but an allowable if not a praiseworthy pious fraud, to pass off any writing that could be useful, as coming from the hand of an Apostle or some companion of the Apostles. Who the three first evangelists were we have only the vaguest tradition to inform us. Why books which were read in the Christian congregations and highly esteemed, like the first Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians and the other writings of the Apostolic Fathers, should have been ultimately excluded from the Canon, it is not easy to explain, especially when it is remembered, that down to the days

of Eusebius (A. D. 320), and indeed much later, the gravest doubts were entertained as to the canonicity of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the second Epistle of Peter, the second and third Epistles of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Revelation of John. So much, and far more, of confusion and uncertainty hangs over the history of the New Testament Canon no less than the Old.

We have not attempted an examination of the subject of the Canon of Scripture, for that is not our present theme; but we have probably seen enough to show us how much difficulty and obscurity environ this very important subject: and we have perhaps seen enough to show us that the broad distinction between canonical and uncanonical writings is one set up by the dogmatic definitions of man rather than by the actual differences which sever the two classes of composition. At all events we have taken a sufficient glimpse at the history of the Canon to convince us that the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible must be proved by some other evidence or it will never rest securely on the canonicity of Scripture.

Connected with this argument concerning canonicity is a feeling which, we can readily understand, will arise in some minds. What, it may be said, do you tamper with the canon of Scripture? Would you venture to add Ecclesiasticus to the Old Testament, and, possibly, to subtract the epistle of Jude from the New? Do you not remember that the last book in the Bible terminates with the words: "If any man "shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him "the plagues that are written in this book; and if "any man shall take away from the words of the "book of this prophecy, God shall take away his "part out of the book of life, and out of the holy "city, and from the things which are written in this "book?" Do you dare, in the face of this denunciation, to say that the history of the canon of Scripture is dark and full of doubt?

Our answer to such a challenge is that we are convinced the system of addition and diminution, alluded to in this passage of the Apocalypse, is that which takes place when men perversely interpret the record of this vision in such ways that it may seem to condemn any good which God has not condemned, or to excuse any evil which the God of truth has condemned. If any man willfully distort this book, in order to make it square with his own wicked or uncharitable prejudices, then such an one—and we hope there never was such an one—seems to us to incur this dread denunciation. At all events, whatever else this passage may mean, no man of ordinary information can suppose that the writer of the Apocalypse framed his words as a conclusion of the Bible and to put a seal on the New Testament canon; for it is well known and all but universally acknowledged that—if it be not certain that the Apocalypse was one of the very earliest of the New Testament writings, composed in the reign of Nero—at least, it was far from being the latest New Testament writing. Indeed, the popular notion—as shown in Nicholls' Help to Reading the Bible, and in many similar works—represents the Apocalypse as having been composed by John before his Epistles and before his Gospels. But, on this supposition, John would, according to our objector's idea, have excluded himself from the book of life, for he, subsequently to penning the book of the Revelation, "added unto those things" by writing three letters and a gospel. Besides, it is not only in the New Testament that we meet with such a passage as our objector urges against us. In Deuteronomy (iv. 2) we read—"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command "you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye "may keep the commandments of the Lord your God "which I command you." Now, if the text in Revelation closed the canon of the New Testament, must not its parallel in the Pentateuch have likewise closed the more ancient canon? And, if so, by what right do

any compositions, save the so-called five books of Moses, claim a place in the Jewish Canon?

Thus manifestly does our objector's interpretation destroy the canonicity of some of the New Testament writings, and of most of the Old Testament. We hope he will try our interpretation of Rev. xxii. 18. 19; but, whether he will do this or not, his argument against us plainly fails.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROMISES BY WHICH OUR LORD IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE GUARANTEED THE INSPIRATIONAL INFALLIBILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Our next inquiries will be directed to an investigation of the promises by which Jesus is said to have gurranteed infallibility to the New Testament writers.

The first of these promises is recorded by Matthew.* It is to the effect that the twelve shall be put on trial in course of persecution, but that they need take no thought how or what they shall speak for "it shall be "given you in that same hour what ye shall speak, for "it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your father "which speaketh in you."

This we regard as a most important passage in its bearing on our present subject. Let us notice it with an exactness proportioned to its importance. On comparing the narratives, given by Mark and Luke, of the events connected with this discourse of our Lord, it is evident that Jesus was preparing his twelve apostles for a temporary separation from himself during which they were, in six parties of two each, to preach exclusively to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This mission was committed to the twelve, and was discharged by them as we learn from Mark and Luke. In their missionary progress Jesus forewarned them that they would "be brought before "governors and kings" (the rulers and authorities then holding power in Palestine) "for his sake, for a "testimony against them and the Gentiles." It is in prospect of these immediately impending trials that

* Matt. x. 19, 20; Mark vi. 7, &c.; Luke ix. 1, &c.

Jesus gives the twelve such a clear and full promise of Divine inspiration which should, without effort on their part, enable them for their defence. The gospels give us no detailed account of the manner in which this promised inspiration wrought in the twelve during their experimental journey, nor are we told what special occasion any of the six different parties had for its use. But this is clear that, some time before the death of Jesus, a temporary separation took place between him and his disciples, and prior to that separation he gave them a distinct promise of inspiration which was to be immediately needful and immediately available for them.

Now, if inspiration made the twelve infallible, how was it that, besides manifold other errors and sins, the Apostles remained ignorant, till long after the death of Christ, of the plain meaning of those explicit terms in which the Lord foretold to them his death? If it be replied, as doubtless it may be, that this promise was special and only insured the inspiration of the Apostles (and their consequent infallibility) while they were actually defending themselves against persecutions in the courts of the Jewish and Roman authorities, we would only rejoin—Well, let the same measure of criticism be dealt out to the other promises of Jesus, and you will be in a fair way to destroy all claim to inspiration on the part of Mark, Luke, and Paul; for, according to this strict mode of dealing with the letter of Christ's promises, these holy men never appear to have received any special promise of inspiration.

But few sober earnest-minded men will, we think, be disposed to play fast and loose in this manner with inspiration, which they regard as implying the infallibility of the inspired.

Another promise of Jesus is recorded by Luke, which in many points resembles that which we have just been considering. It is given in these terms:*

* Luke xii. 1—13.

"When men bring you unto the synagogues and unto "magistrates and powers, take ye no thought how or "what thing ye shall answer, or what we shall say, "for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour "what ye ought to say." Here again we have a provision of inspired defence against times of persecution. In this respect this promise, like the former, may be said to have been special: but what we would notice in this promise is that it is addressed to vast masses of listeners, for the Evangelists introduces the discourse with the words "When there were gathered "together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, Jesus began "to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye," &c. Accordingly the discourse is at first chiefly addressed (down to the seventh verse of the chapter) to those who were already Christ's "friends." In the eighth verse, however, the address becomes evidently more general. The early part had been spoken in the hearing of the multitude though directed chiefly to the "disciples;" but in the eighth and following verses the address is as general as words can make it. "Whosoever" is the phrase which occurs twice in three verses and then, in the two next verses, follow the words of inspirational promise already quoted. In the midst of his discourse the thirteenth verse tells us that "one of the company" interrupted Jesus with some selfish question.

Thus there is the strongest evidence or, rather, there is the clearest statement that in this case Jesus promised inspiration to any man "whosoever," for the gospel's sake, should "be brought unto the synagogues and magistrates and powers." Now let this promise be made as special as it can. Confine it, if you will, to an assurance of the Spirit's aid being given to Christian disciples in the time of their judicial trial only. Still there is, in the history of the Acts of the Apostles, precisely such a set of circumstances described as that under which this promise guaranteed

inspiration. We can accordingly examine the defence of the deacon Stephen before the Jewish Sanhedrim and see, at all events, what this promised inspiration did not do for him. The Christian protomartyr, after speaking "by the Spirit" in such a way as confuted his Jewish adversaries, was brought before the council for the testimony he had borne to Jesus of Nazareth. Stephen was set on his defence.* His speech was interrupted and his life cut short by the violence of his enemies. Assuredly here, if any where, was a man to whom, and a posture of affairs in which, the promise should be fulfilled "the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say."

Now, by the evidence of the first sixteen verses of Stephen's speech, how stands the dogma of inspirational infallibility?

Not to lay stress upon the apparent discrepancy between Stephen's statement that the call of Abraham was prior to the patriarch's leaving Mesopotamia and the narrative in Genesis which represents the call as if it had been subsequent to Terah's change of residence from Ur of the Chaldeans to Haran or Charran, the inspired protomartyr says that God "gave" Abraham "none inheritance in" the land of promise, "no "not so much as to set his foot on." The Book of Genesis† records that "the field of Ephron, and the "cave which was therein, and all the trees that were "in the field, that were in all the borders round about "were made sure unto Abraham for a possesion" in the most public and binding manner.

Stephen says "God spake on this wise, That his "seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they "should bring them into bondage and entreat them "evil 400 years." This quotation appears to have been drawn from Genesis (xv. 13—16): but the book of Exodus (xii. 40) tells us with great exactness, even using the expression "the selfsame day it came to

* Acts vii. † Genesis xxiii. 17, 18,

pass," that "the sojourning of the children of Isreal "in Egypt was 430 years."

Once more, Stephen says, "Joseph called his father "Jacob to him and all his kindred, threescore and "fifteen souls." The Old Testament, in two different passages, (Gen. xlvi. 27; Deut. x. 22,) assures us that "all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into "Egypt, were threescore and ten."

Yet again, Stephen says, "So Jacob went down into "Egypt and died, he and our fathers, and were carried "over into Sychem and laid in the sepulchre that Abra- "ham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Em- "mor the father of Sychem." In direct contradiction to two assertions in this passage the Old Testament informs us that Jacob* was most solemnly buried, not at Sychem, but "in the cave of Machpelah" near Hebron; and moreover† that it was "Jacob," and not Abraham, who "bought a parcel of a field at Shec- "hem from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father."

Now we shall carry the convictions of every attentive, honest mind with us when we assert that this speech of Stephen's was inspired if Christ's promise was ever fulfilled or ever meant to be fulfilled at all. Of course, if any man say Stephen's speech was inspired, but Luke does not report it exactly, such an assertion denies the infallibility of the Book of the Acts, and so, we take it, concedes that an inspired writing may err. But we address ourselves to the so-called orthodox most of whom now-a-days believe that inspiration makes the Bible infallible. They believe the Acts inspired and therefore infallible. They believe Stephen's speech correctly reported to us; and, we are persuaded, they believe Stephen was, as Scripture asserts,* a man "full of the Holy Spirit," and that his speech was inspired. In its first sixteen verses we have seen six contradictions of the Old

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* Genesis l. 13. † Genesis xxxiii. 19.

* Acts vi. 5.

Testament history. Are we prepared to say that the Old Testament is at fault, and so to give up the idea of infallibility as attaching to the Jewish Scriptures? or shall we own that the inspired Stephen, in his most exalted moment of inspiration, when he was a fearless martyr for his dear Lord and ours—when his countenance shone with more than human brightness on his assailants—when he prayed for his wicked murderers "Lord lay not this sin to their charge"—was even then liable to confusion of thought and shortness of memory and so misquoted his own Scriptures? Or, shall we say, as seems most probable, that Stephen was not likely, even in the haste and confusion of addressing a riotous rabble, to make so many misquotations from the holy Scriptures; but that Luke, in collecting the records for his history, may easily have, consciously or unconsciously, left errors in this speech, just as they had been penned by some unlearned Christian from whose document Luke transcribed them, either without observing their want of agreement with the Old Testament, or, if he did perceive this, thinking it more honest to leave them as they were shown in the document of whose general trustworthiness he was satisfied.

One of these three suppositions is inevitable; either the inspired Old Testament, or the eminently inspired speech of Stephen, or the inspired historian Luke is in error. Whichever alternative may most commend itself to our judgment the idea of inspirational infallibility, as resting on our Saviour's promise or on any other ground, will be alike refuted.

But we pass to the consideration of another class of our Lord's promises which are sometimes urged as guaranteeing the infallible inspiration of the twelve Apostles, and therefore, by some strange sequence of causation, of all the New Testament writers and only of them. Jesus, it is argued, said "As thou hast sent "me into the world, even so have I also sent them into "the world." Was not Jesus an infallible teacher it is asked, and, if so, must not the Apostles also have

been infallible teachers? We answer that it might as well be put thus: Jesus was a sinless teacher, therefore his Apostles, whom He sent as He himself was sent, were like Him sinless. The infallibility of inspiration cannot be proven thus.

But, again, Jesus said to his Apostles* "Whatsoever "ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and "whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in "heaven:" and He said unto them "Receive ye the "Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are "remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain "they are retained."† And moreover He promised "to be with them alway even unto the end of the "world."‡ These and many other such assurances did our Lord leave with his Apostles. Well then, it is urged, do not such grand promises as these justify us in believing that, as teachers of religion at all events, if not as historians and geographers and men of science, the Apostles must have been so inspired as to be free from all actual error and so to be infallible? Now let this question be fairly looked at. Who among the Apostles was more with Jesus than Peter? Who had a weightier or more direct charge given to him to feed the sheep and the lambs of Christ's flock? Who but he was to strengthen his brethren when he had been converted after the denial of his Master? Was it not he to whom especially the power of binding and loosing (whatever that power may have been) was given? Was it not he who, apparently even more than his associate John, took part in edifying the infant church of Christ on and after the day of Pentecost?

Peter, though no lord over the heritage of God, was conspicuously eminent as an Apostle of Jesus, so that he, if any, would be sure to be infallibly inspired. But what do our Protestant friends most truly and most scripturally say to the Roman Catholic assertion

* Matt. xviii. 18. † John xx. 23. ‡ Matt. xxviii. 20.

of Peter's infallibility? Are they not the very men to deny this infallibility? Do they not point, with an irrefragable cogency of logical force, to the erroneous and superstitious teaching with which Peter was corrupting the religion of Christ when, at Antioch, Paul "withstood him to the face because he was to "be blamed?" If then all the promises of Jesus did not make Peter infallible as a religious teacher on that occasion at Antioch, what proof is there that they *ever* made him infallible either when he wrote or when he spoke? It is not for us in these pages to go into and explain in detail all the promises of Christ to his Apostles and disciples; but, whatever was the meaning of any or of all these promises, one thing is clear, namely, that they did not imply the infallible inspiration even of the Apostles—how much less of all the New Testament writers—for we have seen that Peter was not free from liability to err in his religious teaching; and, if not he, then no man else. Lest any should naturally enough think the Apostles might err when they *spoke* on religious subjects but yet be infallible when they *wrote*, it may be worth while to remind the reader that our Lord's promises of Inspiration have direct and explicit reference to *speaking*, and only attach secondarily and by way of implication to that which the Apostles or others *wrote*.

Before we pass from the examination of Christ's promises it will be—not necessary for the completeness of our argument—but satisfactory to the carefulness of some inquirers, if we give a brief consideration to the numerous and glorious promises of Inspiration contained in that last discourse of Jesus of which the beloved disciple has preserved the only record for us.

After what has been already written, our question, with reference to these most precious promises, will be simply whether their grammatical construction compels us to understand them as holding out the prospect of infallible inspiration to the Apostles and "those who should believe on Christ through their

"word," or whether we may simply and naturally assign to them a less pretentious and more tenable signification?

We shall take these several promises in the order of their occurrence in the fourteenth and three following chapters of John's Gospel.

Jesus, anticipating the approach of his own death, is engaged in consoling his Apostles. "I will pray "the Father," he says,* "and he shall give you "another comforter that he may abide with you for "ever, even the Spirit of *the* truth," *i. e.* the Spirit of my revelation. Now a preliminary question of great importance in considering these chapters is do they hold out the hope of the Spirit's presence to the Apostles alone or to them in common with all Christian believers and inquirers?

The analogy of Scripture inclines us to adopt the second of these alternatives: and, indeed, it is remarkable how all Jesu's promises of the Spirit are quoted as in some sense belonging to every modern Christian by the very theologians who insist most on these promises as guaranteeing infallibility to the New Testament writers. One is disposed to say to these illogical men, If the promises made the Apostles infallible, and if the same promises are rightly applied by you to us, why are we not made infallible? But, to return from this digression, the analogy of Scripture makes it probable that these promises of inspiration are applicable to all believers as well as to the Apostles, for instance, Christ in his Sermon on the Mount says "*Every one* that asketh receiveth: and "he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it "shall be opened," † and "if ye being evil know how "to give good gifts unto your children, how much "more shall your Father which is in heaven give good "things to them that ask him." Luke, ‡ reporting these same promises, as spoken by our Lord on another

* John xiv, 16. † Matt. vii. 8, &c. ‡ Luke xi. 13.

occasion, substitutes "the Holy Spirit" in the place of the general term "good things." Thus it is apparent that, according to the Gospels, every one that asketh for the Holy Spirit receiveth Him from the heavenly Father. Moreover, even in those last affecting words of Christ, which (according to John's gospel) were addressed directly and primarily only to the Apostles, there are several expressions to show how wide were the assurances of the Comforter's advent, and how world-embracing were the sympathies which now moved in the Saviour's breast. When the Comforter came it was "*the world*" he was to convince of sin, of righteousness and of judgement. "Neither pray I "for those alone" whom thou hast already given me "but for them also which shall believe on me through "their word, that they all may be one as thou, Father, "art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in "us, that *the world* may believe that thou has sent "me." * Remembering, then, the general analogy of Scripture and bearing in mind the expressions which occur in this very discourse of our Lord, we set out with a conviction that these chapters are likely to hold out an assurance of the Spirit's presence to the Apostles in common with all Christian inquirers and believers.

In this light the promise of the Spirit of the truth "abiding for ever," *i. e.* throughout the whole Christian dispensation, becomes intelligible.

In the course of our perusal of the fourteenth chapter of John, we find the words "the Holy Ghost shall "teach you all things and bring all things to your re- "membrance whatsoever I have said unto you†." Undoubtedly, if any man choose to interpret these expressions perversely, he can make out a promise that the Apostles or rather that all Christians should, the Spirit teaching them all things, possess a complete encyclopædic knowledge of the universe and an exact

* John xvii. 20. † John xiv. 26.

recollection of all Christ's minutest and most ordinary sayings. We have seen, however, that such an interpretation is contradicted by the phenomena of New Testament composition.

The question for us then is not what is the possible but what is the true, common sense meaning of this promise. Had not the disciples misunderstood all their Master's instructions? Were they not still—when this promise was given—in utter darkness as to the object of Jesu's mission and the nature of Messiah's kingdom? Were they not still hankering after right and left hand seats in some earthly court? Was it not with the sword that they were ready to establish his throne? What knew they of the "king of truth" whose "kingdom is not of this world?" What spirit were they of who wished to destroy the unconvinced and the lost with fire from heaven?

Well, now, if, by the crucifixion of Jesus, all their mundane hopes were shaken, not to say destroyed, and if, thereupon, the Holy Spirit worked with their alarmed, disappointed and anxious spirits, and if by his co-operation and guidance, they (and many a one besides) were brought to see the folly of thinking the kingdom of God was meat and drink—if they were thus led to recognise that kingdom as consisting in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, would not many an instruction of Christ's, that had been dark and enigmatic to them before, become clear, pregnant with Heavenly-minded wisdom, and so vividly and freshly stand forth in their memory where it had long lain entranced and almost dead? Most remarkable is it that the Spirit is here spoken of, not is a revealer, but merely, though marvellously, as about to revive the human faculty of remembrance which prejudice had so long blinded and benumbed. Here there is no promise which must necessarily be understood as a guarantee of infallibility, but rather we find in these words a most intelligible assurance

of re-invigoration to a human memory which had been palsied by the stupidity of prejudice.

The next promise, which Mr. Henderson and other writers on Inspiration quote in support of scriptural infallibility, is couched in these words,* "When the "Comforter is come, he shall testify of me: and ye "also shall bear witness because ye have been with "me from the beginning."

We are at a loss to imagine what portion of these words conveys a promise of infallibility. Two remarks, however, we make with reference to this passage; first, the inspiration here spoken of is manifestly to be given to others as well as to the Apostles, for it is to be a testimony which the Spirit will bear to men to whom likewise the Apostles, as Christ's witnesses, will bear their testimony as an auxiliary to that of the Spirit: and secondly, that which is spoken of as fitting the Apostles to be Christ's witnesses is, not any supposed infallible inspiration, but simply their having been eye and ear-witnesses of Jesu's ministry. Then follows the promise of the Spirit as about to "convince "the world of sin, righteousness and judgment." We do not know that there is any thing to make it apparent that the world has become in any way infallible, notwithstanding this gracious promise of *inspired* conviction.

After this, we reach the last promise that is to be noticed. "When the Spirit of the truth is come he "will guide you into all *the* truth, for he shall not "speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear "that shall he speak: and he shall show you things to "come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of "mine and shall show it unto you."† Bearing in mind what was said with reference to the Spirit as a remembrancer, we anticipate no difficulty in interpreting these words without understanding them to imply the infallibility of the New Testament. Hitherto the apostles and others had followed Jesus from a love of

* John xv. 26, 27. † John xvi. 13.

his person, from an admiration of his power, and in the expectation that he would speedily take to himself great power and reign as a temporal monarch with them for his favorites and ministers. Now, whenever these dreams began to melt away before the light of the Messianic day, the Holy Spirit would be a guide to those who wish to follow Jesus: and, led by him, they should explore the inmost recesses of that "wisdom "and righteousness and sanctification and redemp- "tion" which Christ is made unto us by God. The future, in its general aspect of a world renovated by the gospel and of the principles of holiness and love becoming more and more widely prevalent and deeply engrained—this future, even, should thus be revealed to the prophetic gaze of Christian faith, as, by the same Spirit of God, the ancient seers had been enabled to anticipate and foretell the glorious advent of a world's Redeemer. Throughout, too, the Spirit would glorify Jesus, for he would make it plain that all hope and all joy and all amelioration come to man and to the world through the instrumentality, direct on indirect, of that one mediator, the man Jesus Christ. These glorious truths every believer is taught by the Spirit and yet we are not infallible. May not the promises have been even more stupendously fulfilled to the Apostles (if they asked for and sought their fulfilment more earnestly than we do) and yet the apostles have been fallible, like us, notwithstanding their inspiration? The answer is too obvious to require that we should state it. We thus leave the promises of Jesus, as an argument in support of inspirational infallibility, with the remark that none of these promises require—nay more, if their contexts be fairly examined, none of these promises admit of—the idea of inspiration making the apostles or their writings infallible.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ARGUMENT FOR SCRIPTURAL INFALLIBILITY DRAWN FROM THE SUPPOSED NATURE OF DIVINE INSPIRATION.

THE next argument we shall examine in favour of Inspirational Infallibility is one which is derived from the very nature of Inspiration and which rests on the assumed impossibility of errors occurring in a book in whose pages the Holy spirit of God is supposed to be present by the influence he exercised on the writers and by the sanction he gives to their writings. This is an argument on which apparently much stress is laid by the upholders of Scriptural infallibility. And indeed there is a certain obvious plausibility attaching to this argument. Once let our minds be possessed with the notion that the book, which as containing the heavenly Father's teaching we rightly call the "Word "of God," was indited by the Holy Ghost and that its human authors were merely used by that Divine person as so many pens might be used by us—that these human authors were instruments in the hands of the Spirit and not rational free agents—and it follows by an easy process of logic, if not by a necessary course of piety, that we should believe there can be no error in that which the all-knowing has penned. But is not this to lose sight of the palpable fact that the inspired writers so completely retained their human faculties that each wrote in his own style and according to the propensity or habit of his own disposition. Paul was earnest, logical, discursive. John was loving and intuitive. James was as thorough a legalist as one holding the Christian doctrine of grace could be. As diverse as were the characters of

these men so, undeniably, are their extant inspired writings diverse. The Spirit therefore did not employ them to write as machines but as human beings and free agents, even in accordance with the saying of Paul that, when the prophets at Corinth spoke, they should remember their responsibility inasmuch as God left "the spirits of the prophets subject to the "prophets."

Thus then it is clear that, whatever inspiration was or was not, the inspirer co-operated with the inspired but did not annihilate or even suspend the will and human personality of the inspired man. Now, on this view of the matter, how far is it necessary—nay how far is it probable on grounds of analogy—that the inspired writings should possess the quality of infallibility because the co-operative influence of the Allwise was present in the human authors? There are countless analogies whence we might draw an answer to this interrogatory. Two shall suffice.

In the mysterious process of an animal procreation who will deny that God co-operates? Without his co-operation how could the embryo be created? And, when its organism is created, who but God gives that vital energy whereby the new creature becomes a living being or a living soul?

In the contemplation of every devout mind, the agency of God vastly predominates over the agency of the procreating creature: and yet what is the offspring? Is it perfect and free from all blemish because God mainly co-operated in its production? Let a reply be furnished by the imperfections which, confessedly, are born with every brute and every man. The case of not unfrequent monstrosities of various kinds would give additional force to this consideration: but we are content to refer chiefly to the ordinary congenital imperfections of all creatures.

If blemishes in the creature be not incompatible with the stupendous interference of a Divine agency in generation, why should errors in the Bible be any

more incompatible with the admirable co-operation of the Divine Spirit in the writing of that Bible?

Or, again, Scripture itself teaches us that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost; and that, if any man love Jesus and keep his commandments, the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with that man; and, yet, where is the man, except our Lord, who has been either impeccable or infallible? If then there be no practical incompatibility which has hindered the indwelling of Divine influence in our deceitful hearts and in our peccable bodies, why should we deem it a thing impossible that God should have inspired the human authors of Holy Writ and yet that the writings which constitute the sacred volume should not be free from all error, that is, should not be infallible?

Here again then we are led to the remark that even this, at first sight, specious argument for scriptural infallibility, drawn from the acknowledged co-operation of the Infallible One in producing scripture, is wholly inconclusive. Indeed we should notice, in quitting this part of our argument, that as no moral event takes place without some degree of Divine co-operation, forasmuch as it is in God that we live and move and have our being, no moral event (not even sins excepted) could be otherwise than of unmixed excellence and perfection if the supposition, required for the maintenance of this argument, were allowable.

CHAPTER IX.

THE A PRIORI ARGUMENT FOR INSPIRATIONAL INFALLIBILITY.

A VERY few words will suffice in dealing with the argument in support of inspirational infallibility which is drawn from *a priori* considerations of the improbability that such a Being, as we are constrained to believe God is, would make a special revelation of himself to mankind in Christ and yet not secure to the world an infallible record of that revelation.

At the very outset we acknowledge the *a priori* force of this consideration, its force, that is, antecedently to our comparing our expectations with, and correcting them by, the facts which God has placed within the scope of our vision for the very purpose of our ascertaining the truth and so ridding ourselves of prejudices, that is, of judgments formed *a priori* or before we were acquainted with the evidence. God having given to one particular age a special and unique manifestation of himself and of his will towards man, it is, without doubt, antecedently probable that He will likewise have caused a special and (if it so seem to any mind) an infallible record of that special revelation. This we are ready to concede. But what then? Are not a thousand suppositions antecedently probable, which yet experience of facts compels us to abandon as not true in effect, however probable they may have appeared in the prospect of expectation?

What could, *a priori*, be more probable than that God would prevent sin? Yet a bitter and humiliating experience compels us to own that sin, however antecedently improbable, is a dread reality.

It is not too much to say that there is hardly one of our *a priori* expectations on any subject which the col-

lection of experience does not oblige us to modify if not wholly to reverse.

In this very matter for instance of the probabilities attaching to a special revelation, it is well known that the majority of those who profess and call themselves Christians lay stress on other *a priori* arguments. And, indeed, is it not obvious that, if an infallible record of revelation be antecedently probable, no less probable is it that there should have been always an infallible guardian to preserve this record and an infallible interpreter to ensure a right comprehension of it? These Roman Catholic *a priori* arguments for the infallibility of the church, the councils, the popes, &c., are, as we think, rightly negatived by a due observation of the errors which have been manifest in each and all these antecedently probable receptacles of infallibility. In like manner, while we acknowledge that an antecedent probability exists in favour of scriptural infallibility, we are compelled also to acknowledge that the observable facts of scriptural composition wholly reverse that probability and convince us that errors on all sorts of subjects exist in Holy Writ, and show that, however valuable and precious its pages may be, the Bible is not infallible.

CHAPTER X.

THE A POSTERIORI ARGUMENT FOR INSPIRATIONAL INFALLIBILITY.

ONE more very popular and, we fear, very influential argument for scriptural infallibility remains for us to examine. As the last was the *a priori* argument or that derived from antecedent probabilities, so the argument we at present canvass may be called the *a posteriori* or argument from supposed consequences.

When every other consideration has failed to prove the Bible infallible and, when, on every side, it is clear that even inspiration leaves the precious volume fallible, the final and almost universally prevailing argument is, If the Bible be not *infallibly* inspired, what certainty can we have about the Resurrection of the body or even the Immortality of the soul? How can we be sure that we know what Christ taught or what God would have us to do? To what authority can we appeal as a last resort in all doubts and all controversies? In disproving the infallibility of the Scriptures are you not overthrowing the grounds of all Christian faith and even opening a road that will surely lead the persevering traveller through infidelity into Atheism?

In answer to these and similar questions we hope, in the sequel, to show how a regard for the Bible, which plainly recognises the fallibility of that inspired book, is one of the strongest safeguards against unbelief and is likely to be a most influential propagator of the Christian religion. But, supposing we could not clear the apparent fallibility of Scripture from any or from all the evil consequences which, it is often asserted,

would follow upon the acknowledgment of that fallibility; what then? Are we so sure that the alleged but unproved doctrine of an infallible Inspiration does keep men in the church—does afford a plain and acknowledged canon of faith—does do all the good (or *any* of it) which it is asserted that the avowal of Biblical fallibility would undo? Are not many men unbelievers notwithstanding the alleged infallibility of the Bible? Have not some been driven into unbelief chiefly by this very dogma? Do all the tens of thousands of Roman Catholic believers agree in bowing to Scripture as the alone infallible standard? Does the acknowledgment of the infallibility of this one standard bind in one brotherhood of agreement Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Calvinists and Arminians, and all the other sects even of Protestantism? Has not each sect, and almost every individual, its own (fallible) interpretation of the infallible Book?

But, whatever may be the possible, or even the probable, evil consequences of avowing truth in reference to the popular, and, as we think, perilous notion of Inspirational infallibility, can it be our duty to lie for God? Must we do evil that good may come of it? Ought we to uphold any thing, which we know to be untrue, for the sake of results which we hope will accrue to us and to the world from its upholding? Is not God great and good enough to take care of His own cause which, in Christianity as in all things, is the cause of truth? To think of maintaining an untrue doctrine of Inspirational infallibility, for fear of the consequences which may follow upon the acknowledging and enunciating of the truth, shows assuredly a most lamentable want of faith towards Him who, being Almighty, has sent forth to us His Son Jesus, the Anointed, to be the way, the *truth* and the life: and thus to think is, at the same time, directly to disobey the inspired precept "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good;" and to exclude ourselves ob-

stinately from the company of those whose duty it is to "be ready always to give to every man a reason for "the hope that is in" them.

What, we may well inquire, would now have been our position and that of all mankind if a regard to consequences had prevented Jesus and his Apostles from divulging and, at the peril and price of their lives, insisting on those truths which were not inaptly described as "turning the world upside down." How must the existing faith of Jew and Gentile have been shaken and torn to atoms before it could be true that "old things were passed away and behold ! all things "were become new !" You send your missionary to the Brahmin, to the Romanist or to the slaves and the slaveholders, and what consequences may not ensue? Nay, what consequences are sure to ensue if your mission have any success at all? Must not mother be set against daughter and the nearest against the dearest? Did not Jesus so come as not to bring peace but a sword into this evil world? If Wickliffe, Huss, Jerome, Luther, Zuingle, Calvin—nay, if Galileo, Hervey, Jenner, or any man who has ever had any tidings startling and troublesome, but profitable, to communicate, had taken warning and desisted, from consideration of consequences, to himself in the way of obloquy and martyrdom, or to the world in the way of amazement and revolution, where would the improvements of modern civilisation and the blessings of the Gospel of Salvation now lie buried and lost?

A priori arguments should make us carefully examine any claim which, with their support, is made upon our belief. Arguments from consequences should make every prudent and, still more, every pious man anxiously reflect on the certainty of what he has to tell and on the importance of its truth being made known. But, when once the antecedent probabilities and the supposed consequences have so operated on our minds, they have done their proper work ; and he, who, from

a regard to these considerations, conceals important truth, is putting his light under a bushel, failing to be the salt of the earth and falling under the condemnation, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and "doeth it not to him it is sin."

CHAPTER XI.

RESUME AND CONCLUSION.—ANSWER TO THE QUESTION OF THIS BOOK AND OUTLINE OF THE METHOD TO BE EMPLOYED IN THE TWO SUCCEEDING BOOKS.

We have now examined the several arguments which are ordinarily advanced in support of an iuspiration of the Bible which is defined as rendering that blessed book infallible. We have not attempted to open the subjects of Miracles or of Prophecy generally; but we have probably seen enough of the Scriptural teaching on these points to assure the reader that they cannot either of them be adduced in proof of inspiration making the Bible infallible.

We have seen that the authority said to be attributed to Scripture by Jesus cannot be understood as implying the infallibility of Holy Writ; and that, if it could, we should still need some proof that we had an infallible record of what Jesus said.

We have seen that the amazing excellence of the Bible no more proves it infallible than similar excellence proves any thing else, in which that excellence resides, to be free from all error and imperfection.

We have seen that, instead of the History of the Canon proving the Bible infallible, that History itself needs much investigation, if indeed it be not hopelessly dark, so that it is rather the goodness and approved excellence of the Old and New Testaments which warrant our assenting to their canonicity than their cononicity which assures us of their inspiration.

We have seen that our Lord's several promises of inspiration may be—if indeed we should not say *must*

be—so interpreted as wholly to exclude the element of infallibility from the idea of inspiration.

We have seen that the common arguments, from antecedent probabilities and from supposed consequences, are altogether inadequate to support the notion of scriptural infallibility, and, indeed, are quite unworthy to give pause to an earnest mind which has a clear perception of some unrecognized, and perhaps unpalatable, though useful and important truth.

And, yet again, we have seen that there is nothing in the idea of inspiration itself which renders it incompatible for errors to exist in a person or in a book in which a measure of the Spirit of God is indwelling.

Besides these and some other points, which have all been touched in the course of the preceding pages, we know no other argument, worth calling such, which has been, or can be, adduced to support the popular doctrine of inspirational infallibility.

In our first Book we saw clear indications that the Bible contained errors in history, in morality, and even in religion. That it contains scientific errors few men of ordinary candour and intelligence are now prepared to deny. Thus then our present position is that we have shown there is no reason which ought to lead us to expect infallibility, or freedom from all error, in an inspired book: and, moreover, we have seen that the Bible, which we acknowledge as an inspired book,—yea, as pre-eminently *the* inspired book—has in its pages unmistakable proofs of its fallibility.

We have, for ourselves at least, exorcised the ghost of infallibility from the Bible: but is that volume, therefore, become profitless in our eyes? Far otherwise. We value it, not because of the spurious ornaments of tinsel with which men had surrounded it, but for the real and genuine gold which the heavenly Father has placed therein.

Do we cast away as valueless the writings of

Thucydides, or Tacitus, or Aristotle, because they have some errors in them? Shall we tread under foot and despise Milton, Shakspeare, or Racine, because they are fallible? Do we ignore the lessons of Bacon, of Newton, of Herschel, or of Lyell, of Chalmers, of Arnold, of Whately, of Neander, or of Coleridge, because neither those nor any other writers or their writings have been infallible? Nay, does any sane and godly man despise and neglect the teaching of his church because he may hold, with the twenty-first Article of the Episcopalians in England, that even duly summoned general councils of the universal church "may err, and sometimes have erred, even in "things pertaining unto God?"

If then we revere and study all the so-called uninspired books which we deem wise and good though fallible, why, because we have abandoned an untenable and unreasonable notion of its infallibility, should we lose one jot of veneration for that best and holiest book, the Bible, to which many, if not all, of the greatest and wisest men, in modern times at least, have agreed in affixing the glorious epithet "Inspired?" Instead of adopting any such rash and unholy course of contempt, it will be our effort, in the next Book, to ascertain what is rightly meant by designating the Bible as inspired: and then, in another portion of our volume, we may try to answer for ourselves the question, What is the just authority of the Bible in matters of religious faith? and on what ground, if not on its infallibility, does that authority rest?

BOOK III.

"WHAT IS THE TRUE MEANING OF THE TERM INSPIRATION?"

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

If, as a matter of fact, the Bible be not infallible; and if there be no good reason which can be assigned for our supposing the sacred volume otherwise than fallible, what shall we say of the inspired writings? And first, Do we believe the Bible to be inspired at all? Undoubtedly we do. We are firmly convinced that the writers of Holy Scripture were inspired, and that their writings are the reflex of their own inspired minds and thoughts: and thus we most distinctly avow our belief in the inspiration of the Bible. But, as has been seen, we are assured that there is no connexion whatever between Infallibility and Inspiration.

Section 1.—*The idea of "Inspiration," but not the word, is in Scripture.*

What then is the true meaning of this solemn and important word?

Let us, first of all, remind the reader that there is no such word as our English noun "Inspiration" either in

the Hebrew of the Old Testament or in the Greek of the New. Twice, indeed, in the English Bible, the term is used, but it is not an exact rendering of the idiom in the original. Thus, in Job xxxii. 8, "But "there is a spirit in man and the *inspiration* of the "Almighty gives them understanding," the Hebrew word translated "inspiration" is, according to Gesenius, more correctly rendered by the words "breath" or "spirit." So, too, in 2 Tim. iii. 16, every tyro in Greek knows that an adjective (*theopneustos*, signifying "divinely inspired") the term which our translators have paraphrased as equivalent to "given by inspira- "tion of God." Thus, in the two passages of the English Bible where "inspiration" is mentioned, there is no exactly equivalent noun either in the Hebrew or the Greek.

Do we mean then that the *idea* of inspiration is novel or peculiar to the English? Far from it. We hope, ere long, to show the reader that *this idea* is thoroughly Hebrew: but, in order to do this, it is necessary that we should point out that neither the Hebrew language nor the vocabulary of the New Testament writers expressed this grand idea by any single, abstract word like our "inspiration." If a Jew, or an early Christian, wished to say that any action was referable to some inspiration, his mode of expressing this idea was, Such and such an action was performed by such and such a spirit, good or evil, as the case might be.

Answering, then, to our word inspiration neither the Hebrew of the Old Testament nor the Greek of the New has any term: but, for our words "spirit" and "ghost," the Hebrew had the common term "Ruach" and the rarer noun "Neshamah;" whilst the Greek had the one word "Pneuma."

Thus, then, an English reader, who knows nothing of the Bible's original languages, can thoroughly understand our present investigation if he will remember that, wherever "Spirit" occurs in our Old Testament, it is, in the original, represented generally by the word

"Ruach" and, in a few instances, by the synonymous word "Neshamah:" and wherever "Spirit" or "Ghost" occur in our New Testament, with reference to the Deity, they answer to the one word "Pneuma" in the Greek.

SECTION 2.—*The Vague Application of the terms "Ghost," "Spirit" and their equivalents in the Greek and in the Hebrew.*

THE next observation we would offer to the reader is that all these several terms, in the Hebrew, Greek, and English, are used indiscriminately to denote things sacred and *profane*, if, indeed, this their usage be not an eternal protest against the prevalent belief that any creature of God can be "profane" or otherwise than sacred.

Thus, the word "ghost" is by no means confined to the denoting a divine agent; but even, in modern English, it signifies the popular idea of any disembodied human person; and, in scriptural English, we find the expression "yielded up the ghost" as the rendering for a Greek word signifying "died:" and the word "spirit" is by us employed, in manifold senses, to denote courage, animation, alcoholic mixtures, and a multitude of other things.

The Hebrew word "Neshamah" was used, Gesenius tells us, to signify the "soul" of man, any "living creature," and once to denote the "mind" (in Prov. xx. 27), or, yet again, it was employed to signify "the panting of "those who are angry:" and, in like manner, the other Hebrew term, "Ruach," occurs as a name for the breath of man, the wind, the quarters of heaven, any thing vain and fickle like the wind, the vital principle, and the rational mind.

Equally various are the the significations of the Greek word Pneuma; as is well exemplified by Jno. iii.8.

"*The spirit breatheth* (our translators say with note-worthy incorrectness 'the wind bloweth') where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of *the spirit.*"

Thus wide and various are the significations of the several words, in Hebrew, Greek, and English, by which the agent who inspires is designated. Does the Divine agent derive his name from some resemblance which is supposed to exist between Him and man's mind, or the vital principle, or the wind? Or, on the other hand, do these and many other created beings and energies obtain their honourable designation from the belief that they exist and have their power only by the originating and sustaining instrumentality of God whose name is "Ruach," "Pneuma," "Spirit?"

We are decidedly of the latter opinion ourselves; but, in the meanwhile, we only ask the reader to notice with what a width and consequent occasional confusedness of signification each of these terms is used. "Spirit" is not confined to denoting the Holy Ghost: but has several other meanings in English. So, likewise, is it with "Pneuma" in Greek and with "Ruach" in Hebrew.

But, at present, our object is, if possible, to ascertain in what sense the "Ruach" of God, the divine "Pneuma," the Holy "Spirit" is spoken of? In what manner, and in what persons or things, is he said to operate? If, by the help of Old Testament usage, or if by noticing the way in which these terms are applied in the New Testament and in the languages of Christendom, we can answer this question, we shall be sure of success in finding a true, historical definition for our modern word Inspiration; for we shall have the ancient idea to which more recent custom has affixed this title.

CHAPTER II.

USE OF THE TERMS "RUACH" (SPIRIT) AND "NESHAMAH" (BREATH) IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

LET us first see how the Old Testament speaks of the Divine "Ruach" or "Neshamah?" Every man will be ready with the recollection that an ancient creed declares that the Holy Ruach "spake by the "prophets:" and, accordingly, we find Isaiah (xlviii. 16.) saying, with probable reference to himself, "The "Lord God, and his Ruach, hath sent me;" and Ezekiel (iii. 24.) writes "Then the Ruach entered into "me and said unto me," &c.; and Daniel (v. 12.) is described as a man in whom "an excellent Ruach, and "knowledge, and understanding, &c., were found." So too many of the minor prophets allude to the "Ruach," by whom "the Lord stirred up Zerubbabel" (Hag. i. 14.), and "in" whom "the Lord of Hosts "(Zech. vii. 12.) had sent by his former prophets."

Similarly Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and many other ancient prophets are declared to have been influenced by the holy "Ruach:" and, especially, the Jewish history (2 Sam. xxiii. 2.) informs us that "The "Ruach of the Lord spake by David."

In all these and many more passages it is obvious that the "Ruach" of God is described as in some way enabling or exciting the prophets of Israel. Was this, then, the only connexion in which the Hebrew writers spoke of the Holy Spirit? Let us see.

At the commencement of the book of Genesis we find it stated that "the Ruach of God *moved* upon "the face of the (chaotic) waters." The Hebrew verb, here translated "moved," occurs again in Deut.

xxxii. 11; and there it is rendered "fluttereth over" with reference to an eagle cherishing and developing life and warmth in her nestlings. So beautifully and accurately has the scholarlike Milton given the true meaning of Gen. i. 2, when, in his invocation, he addresses the "Ruach" of God thus,

> "And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
> Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
> Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first
> Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
> *Dove-like sat'st brooding* on the vast abyss
> And mad'st it pregnant."

Such is the earliest Scriptural reference to the divine "Ruach." Now, either this mention of the Spirit of God "moving on the face of the waters" is meaningless and inopportune; or, the idea is intended to be conveyed to us that, even with inert, chaotic matter, the "Ruach" is tenderly and fosteringly present, waiting to evoke and to sustain the faintest sign of life and order.

If we follow out the suggestion contained in this last interpretation, the Old Testament will offer to our notice several passages in which the "Ruach of "God" is spoken of as inspiring the various portions, animate and inanimate, which go to make up the universe. To this effect the Psalmist (xxxiii. 6.) teaches us saying "By the word of the Lord were the heavens "made; and all the hosts of them by the Ruach (Spir-"it) of his mouth:" while Job (xxvi. 13.) declares "By His Ruach (Spirit) God hath garnished the "heavens;" and Isaiah adopts the same idea in another application when (xxxiv. 16.) he exhorts men to "seek "out the book of the Lord and read" it on a consideration that "the cormorant," "the bittern," "the owl," "the raven," "the thorns," "the nettles," "the bram-"bles," "the dragons," "the wild beasts of the de-"sert," "the wild beasts of the island," "the satyr," "the screech-owl," "the great owl" and "the vultures" shall never "fail" to be the occupants of Idumæa, inasmuch as the mouth of the Lord, "it hath comman-

"ded, and *His Ruach* (Spirit) *it hath gathered them:*" and, in like manner the Pslamist (civ. 29, 30.), speaking of the "fowls of the heaven," "the springs of water," "the grass," "the herb," "the wine," "the trees," "the young lions," "leviathan," and all the inhabitants of the land and of the waters, says "Thou" (God) "hidest thy face, they are troubled. Thou takest "away their Ruach (Spirit), they die and return to "their dust. *Thou sendest forth thy Ruach* (Spirit), *they "are created and thou renewest the face of the earth ;*" and, yet once more, (Psalm cxxxix. 7.) the sacred penmen asks "Whither shall I go from thy Ruach (Spirit)? "or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" and his answer implies throughout that, by His Ruach, God is present and active every where, in heaven, in hell, in the uttermost parts of the sea, in the darkness and in the light, in man's "reins," in the "mother's womb," and even among the wicked to slay them: and, quite in accordance with this Hebrew mode of speaking of the Ruach of God, we find Ezekiel representing the several "wheels" and other portions of his vision Ezek. i. 21.) as moving up and down, hither and thither, because "the Ruach (Spirit) of life was in the wheels."

Thus, then, we have that, which, in every instance, except this last quotation from Ezekiel, is expressly named as the *Ruach or Spirit of God*, described to us in Holy Writ as present and effective in the host of heaven, in the elements, and in the plants and animals of the earth. The pious Hebrew saw nothing strange in regarding the stars and planets as inspired to hold their fixed position or travel in their several orbits. He considered the parts of a vision, which suggested truth of any kind, as inspired. He looked on the tribes of animals and plants as divinely inspired for the selection of their abode. When the heavenly Father sent down the rains alternating with the sunshine, and when "the face of the earth was "thus renewed," the religious Jew saw no profanity in tracing the rise of a fountain, the course of a

stream, the growth of the grass, and the fattening of the cattle to the Inspiration of God. Just as he said (Psalm xxix.) "The *voice** of the Lord shaketh the "wilderness"—"The *voice* of the Lord maketh the "the hinds to calve and discovereth the forests;" or (Pslam cxlvii.) "The Lord covereth the heaven with "clouds; He prepareth rain for the earth; He maketh "grass to grow upon the mountains; He giveth to the beast his food and to the young ravens which cry "unto Him;"—just as the pious Hebrew could thankfully use these words with reference to God and "common things," so could he say—and say most truly, wisely and devoutly—that all the processes of change or of continuance in matter and in life—those processes which we, in our one-sided, though true and philosophical, fashion, ascribe to "the laws of nature" or to "the principles of some science"—were carried on by the direct agency of the Spirit or Ruach of God, and, so, were referable to what, in our idiom, we call divine Inspiration.

Let no one say that this is a novel statement, even if it be true. It is at least as ancient as the Nicene (or Constantinopolitan?) Creed which teaches us to believe, not only that the Holy Ghost "spake by the "prophets," but also that He is "the giver of life." Besides, as to antiquity, we have just been showing that the Jews—the confessedly inspired Jewish writers of the Bible—taught these same truths thousands of years ago.

So far, then, we have seen that, according to the Old Testament idea, it was with the presence and co-operation of the Holy Ghost that the prophets spoke; and with the presence and co-operation of the same Spirit that matter was formed, or life was generated, in the embryo or was sustained in the living creature.

* "The voice of the Lord," in Pslam xxix., is, we believe, a designation of the thunderstorm. This, however, is so far from weakening our argument that it represents the poet as declaring the thunder and the lightning to be *God's inspired* ministers for effecting various purposes on the mountains, in the plains and among the pastures.

We pass on now to notice the various senses, besides the prophetical, in which the Old Testament tells us that the Ruach of God has to do with man as distinguished from other creatures. In the second of the two accounts of man's creation (Gen. ii. 7.), we are told that it was by God's breathing the breath (Neshamah) of life into the nostrils of man that Adam became a living soul. This tallies with what we have already seen of the vital principle being always attributed, in the Old Testament, to what we now call Inspiration. But, as we proceed along the course of the Bible's pages, we learn farther, that, not only did the Egyptian Pharaoh attribute Joseph's power of interpreting dreams and his statesmanlike wisdom (Gen. xli. 38.) to the Spirit of God which was in him, but, in Exod. xxxi. 3, God is represented as having said to Moses, "I have filled Bezaleel with the Spirit of "God, in wisdom, and in understanding and in knowl- "edge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise "cunning works, to work in gold and in silver and in "brass, and in cutting of stones to set them, and in "carving of timber, to work in all manner of work- "manship;" "and in the hearts of all that are wise- "hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all "that I have commanded thee." Similarly, in 1 Chron. xxviii. 12, David is said to have left to Solomon the pattern for the temple, even, "all that he had *by the* "*Spirit.*" In these passages mechanical skill and genius are distinctly ascribed to what we should call the Inspiration of God, just as, in Job xxxii. 8, we have seen that the words are written, "But there is a Spirit or Ruach in man and the Neshamah or inspiration of "the Almighty giveth them understanding." It is Job, too, who says (xxvii. 3.) "All the while my "breath (Neshamah) is in me, and the Spirit (Ruach) "of God is in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak "wickedness:" and it is moreover in the book of Job (xxxiii. 4.) that the wise Elihu acknowledges, "The "Spirit (Ruach) of God hath made me, and the breath "(Neshamah) of the Almighty hath given me life."

The prayer of penitence, fearing lest the love of habitual goodness should be lost in the moral ruin and disorder produced by one frightful sin, is (Psalm li. 11.) "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take "not thy Holy Spirit (Ruach) from me." If assistant judges are, on the advice of Jethro, chosen to aid Moses in the temporal administration of Israelitish affairs, we learn that (Numbers xi. 25.) "the Lord "came down and took of the Spirit that was upon "Moses and gave it unto the seventy elders:" and presently it is stated clearly (Numbers xi. 29.) that it was "the Lord's Spirit" which was so imparted to the elders: and again, when Moses is to appoint his own successor in the government of the Jews, (Numb. xxvii. 18.) the command to him is, "Take thee Joshua, the son of Nun, *a man in whom is the Spirit*, and lay thine hand on him."

Now, in all these passages, is it not manifest that the pious writers of the Old Testament have no hesitation in ascribing judicial discernment, administrative wisdom, mechanical tact, the animal life of man, what we should call inventive genius and, generally, all the powers of human reason and understanding, to the present co-operation of the Spirit of God, that is, to what we call divine Inspiration.

We, men of the present day, call our poets and inventors men of genius. We call our skilful and quick mechanics clever. We often attribute respiration or the continuance of animal life to the due discharge of their several functions by our different organs. The Hebrew did not so. With him human life was owing "to the Spirit of God in man's nostrils," that is, to inspiration: and so too, with him, poetry, inventive powers, genius, cleverness, skill, and intelligence of every kind were owing to the Spirit of God in man, or, as we say, to divine Inspiration.

We have found, then, three distinct but comprehensive classes of action which the Old Testament ascribes to the Spirit or Ruach of God, the originating

and sustaining orderly materiel existence and animal life; the quickening human life and intelligence and skill and holiness; and the inspiring of the prophet.

There is yet another class of operations attributed in the Old Testament to what we call divine Inspiration. Not only is it said of Othniel (Judges iii. 10.) that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him" "and he "judged Israel and *went out to war:*" not only is it written that, in time of war with the Midianites and Amalekites, (Judges vi. 34.) "the Spirit of the "Lord came upon Gideon and *he blew a trumpet and*" *gathered soldiers* after him; not only is it said that, when the Ammonites were oppressing Israel, (Judges xi. 29.) "the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah "and he *passed over Gilead*" *and went to fight against the Ammomites:* but we are told with reference to Samsom—Samson the mighty in faith and strength, but the turbulent, the licentious, and the unholy—that "the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan, between "Zorah and Eshtaol." Now with regard to all these cases the pious Jew might adopt the language which, in Psalm cxliv. 1, is ascribed to David, and might and did, in effect, say of them It is the Lord "which teacheth my hands to war "and my fingers to fight." So then the Old Testament writers saw neither difficulty nor impropriety in believing and declaring that even in men, devoid of holiness or sadly deficient in sanctification, whatever was good or brave or strong, was put there by the Spirit of God. They called the courage and generalship of an Othniel, a Gideon and a Jephthah the result of divine Inspiration; and they attributed the gigantic strength of Samsom to the same holy source. This then, namely the bestowal of physical courage, strategical skill and even muscular strength, is the fourth class of subjects in which the Hebrew recognised that agency of the Spirit (or Ruach) of God which we call divine Inspiration.

We have spoken, for the convenience of our verbal analysis, of four classes of subjects which are described in the Old Testament as partaking of Inspiration, but what generic differences are there between the Inspiration of these various classes? The reflective reader will perceive at once that there is no such difference. The difference is between the subjects or recipients of the divine influence, not between the one and the same divine presence or co-operation which, in every case, justifies the epithet "inspired" being applied to any person or thing. We have spoken throughout of the same "Spirit of God" who energizes over the chaotic waters, in the streams among the hills, in the grass, in the herbs, in the trees, in the animals, in their life and in their instinct; the same "Spirit of God" which energizes in man, in his nostrils, in his heart, and in his brain. In the striking language of the Christian Apostle, It is *one* Spirit distributing to every man severally as He will (1 Cor. xii. 11): but though there are "diversities of gifts," still "it is *the same Spirit*." It is, generically, one and the same divine Inspiration which imparteth goodness to any and to all objects however various those objects may be. The Inspiration is one, though the Inspired be several. Thus our conclusion with reference to the Old Testament is that whatever was good, orderly, or strong—Whether in the adornment of the heavens, in the springing of a blade of grass, in the rolling of the rivers, in the mystery of the womb, in the strength of Samson, in the instinct of the owl, in the common thoughts of ordinary men or in the cleverness and genius of extraordinary men, in the poetry of the Psalmist, or in the predictions and moral teachings of the prophet—whatever—in any or in all these matters, or in aught else—was *good*, the Bible-writer attributed to the Ruach or Spirit of God whose action we designate "Inspiration."

CHAPTER III.

USE OF "PNEUMA" (SPIRIT) IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

LET us now proceed to consult the New Testament writers and observe if they teach us to change or modify this idea of Inspiration. The gospel promises of Inspiration we have already had occasion to observe. We have seen that their veracity must be abandoned if they meant that infallibility should be given to Peter or any man. We have also seen that some, and probably all, of those promises were made, in behalf of those who should subsequently believe in Jesus, as well as on behalf of those who were his contemporary disciples. Accordingly we find the New Testament Scriptures entirely carrying out the Old Testament view of Inspiration. Whatever *good* thing befel, for the furtherance of the gospel, that the New Testament writers do not hesitate to ascribe to the Inspiration of God. It would be strange, indeed, if the Christian Scriptures did not allude with frequency to the agency of the Holy Spirit, for, apart from multitudinous other prophecies to the same effect Isaiah had sung gloriously of the Messiah "on whom Jehovah had put his Spirit,"* and Joel had declared that, in Messiah's days, God would "pour out his Spirit upon *all flesh:*" and the sons and the daughters, the old men and the young, the servants and the handmaids should all be inspired.

Throughout the whole periods of both the Old and the New Testament histories, and through all the time which intervened betwixt Malachi and the Messianic epoch, the Jews still held the same idea of all that is

*Isaiah xlii. 1.

good coming by Inspiration. The only difference, in this respect, between Judaism and Christianity is that the inspiration of the latter, being *the same in kind* with the inspiration of the former, is *fuller in degree*.

Accordingly we find (Luke ii. 25.) that, even prior to the birth of Jesus, the Scripture recognises Simeon as a man "upon whom the Holy Ghost was:" and of John the Baptist it was foretold (Luke i. 15.) that he should be "filled with the Holy Ghost even from his "mother's womb:" and accordingly too, when our Lord was to be miraculously conceived—when the spiritual father of our race was, as a man, to be created—it is recorded (Luke i. 35.) in the words "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power "of the Highest shall overshadow thee; there-"fore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee "shall be called the Son of God:" and, in like manner, it is declared of our Saviour that, throughout his visible life in this world, the spirit was given to him "without measure" (John iii. 34.) So, it was by the Spirit that Jesus was led up into the wilderness to be tempted (Matt. iv. 1.); by the same Spirit (Matt. xii. 28.) he cast out devils; and (1 Pet. iii. 18.) by the same Spirit he was "quickened" after he had been "put to "death in the flesh."

During our Lord's lifetime, and therefore before the Spirit (cf. John vii. 39.) was yet given in that fulness which had been foretold by Joel and which began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, Jesus said to his Apostles, when he sent them on their temporary and experimental mission apart from him, (Matt. x. 20.) In your apologies "it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit "of your father which speaketh in you." Thus completely, throughout the whole history of the Jewish and Christian religion has the doctrine of the one indwelling and variously co-operative Spirit of God been recognised. Nothing, according to the gospel of Luke (xi. 13.), can be of more universal applicability than the assurance given by our Saviour, "Every one that

"asketh receiveth," * * * "If ye then being evil "know how to give good things to your children, how "much more shall your heavenly father give *the Holy Spirit to them that ask* him." Nor can any thing be clearer than the assertion of John (i. 13 : cf. iii. 5.) that the change in any man's mind, by which he became a believer on the Son of God and a member of the kingdom of heaven, was effected, not by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of mere humanity, but by the agency of the Spirit.

So far, then, the early part of the Christian dispensation shows an entire agreement with the Old Testament in recognising the Spirit of God as the originator and sustainer of every thing good. And in those extant records of Christian life, which have reference to the period subsequent to what is known as the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we shall find the same idea of Inspiration only accompanied by a belief that the beneficent Spirit of God was more deeply and more extensively diffused in his energetic and sanctifying influences.

On the day of Pentecost, and subsequently, it cannot have been the miraculous powers, imparted by the Holy Ghost, which were the novelty; for, if we credit the Old and New Testament history, there had been many miracles in ancient times; and, even in the three years immediately preceding that Pentecostal day, Jesus and his followers had been achieving a wide-spread fame by their countless and astounding deeds of healing, exorcising, and raising the dead. The novelty was, not in the miracle of Pentecost, but in the extent to which the miracle-working agents were multiplied, for, we read, "they," (apparently the 120) "were *all* filled "with the Holy Ghost;" (Acts ii. 4.) and at a later date again, when the Christians numbered their thousands of converts, we read (Acts iv. 31.) "They "were *all* filled with the Holy Ghost:" and again (Acts v. 32.) Peter declares, before the hostile authorities, that the Holy Ghost is given to them (evidently

meaning to *all* of them) that obey God and believe on Jesus. So, too, at Samaria, the Holy Ghost was given to all on whom the apostles laid their hands (Acts viii. 17.) The churches, throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, were multiplied (Acts ix. 31.) "walking in "the comfort of the Holy Ghost." At Antioch (Acts xiii, 2.) "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas "and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." In the council at Jerusalem the form of drawing up an apostolic opinion is "It seemed good (*edoxe*) to the "Holy Ghost and to us" (Acts xv. 28.) If, by a dream, or by any other circumstances or causes, Paul and his companions were induced to abandon some field of missionary labour (Acts xvi. 6, 10.) and to adopt another, the Christian expression was "we were forbid- "den of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia" and we "assuredly gathered that the Lord had called "us to preach the gospel unto the Macedonians." In a word, if there was *any thing* which seemed *good*, in their thoughts or actions, the early Christians, like the pious Jews before them, ascribed its excellence to divine inspiration. If a believer had been in tribulation and had learned patience, experience and hope, Paul attributed such a glorious state of mind (Rom. v. 5.) to the agency of "the Holy Ghost which is given unto "*us*." The same apostle exhorts men to be fervent *in spirit* (Rom. xii. 11.) : he prays (Rom. xv. 13.) that the believers at Rome may abound in hope "through the "power of the Holy Ghost :" he urges men (1 Cor. vi. 19.) to "flee fornication" because their "bodies are the "temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in them, which "they have of God :" and, so *universal* does he hold the inspiration of Christians to be, that (Rom. viii. 9.) he solemnly declares, in the midst of one of his most sublime chapters, "Now if any man have not the Spirit "of Christ, he is none of his :" so, too, he writes to the corrupt church at Corinth (1 Cor. iii. 16.) "The "Spirit of God dwelleth in you :" he recognises, as we have seen, the difference of gifts—nay more, he

places the spiritual grace of love, which is the bond of perfectness, above all other graces and incomparably above all gifts (1 Cor. xii. 31, xiii. 13.): he exhorts men (Eph. iv. 30.) not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God: he teaches that gifts of the Holy Ghost—even miraculous gifts—(1 Cor. xiv. 32.) do not deprive men of the power of free moral option or relieve them from entire moral responsibility, for, saith he, "the spirits "of the prophets are subject to the prophets:" he warns the Thessalonians (1 Thess. v. 19.) against "quenching the Spirit." In all these and many more passages of his writings Paul recognises the various modes in which all Christians (1 Cor. xii. 13.) have drunk of the same Spirit, or in which every believer partakes of divine inspiration, as far as there is any thing *good* in him.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches the same doctrine when (Heb. vi. 4.) he represents "par- "taking of the Holy Ghost" as one of the constituents of Christian privilege. So James, without naming inspiration, expresses the idea most distinctly in several verses, of which the reader will remember, as a specimen, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is "from above and cometh down from the Father of lights." Peter calls all believers "a *spiritual* house," (1 Peter ii. 5.) and comforts the persecuted with the truth that "the Spirit of glory and of God (1 Peter iv. "14.) rests upon them." It is needless to say how constantly John, in all his writings, recognises the promises and the operations of the Spirit of God and of truth. Even Jude (19, 20.) blames those who "have "not the Spirit" and urges all men to "pray in the "Holy Ghost." Thus do the writers of both the Old and New Testaments teach us that all goodness every where—in all persons and things—is attributable to divine Inspiration, that such Inspiration is essential to every man in order to his being a member of the kingdom of heaven or a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that Inspiration is of various value, according to

the excellence which it produces, so that inspired preaching (or "prophesying") is better than the amazing but irrational gift of "tongues;" and love, like that depicted in 1 Cor, xiii. 4—7, is superior to any other result of Inspiration.

It is very remarkable that nowhere—not even in Jeremiah—do we find the inspired penmen—Jewish or Christian—pronouncing their own *writings* inspired.* Yet we doubt not they believed every writing—like every thing else—to be inspired in proportion to its goodness. They would find no difficulty in pronouncing the histories or parables to (whichever class each case may belong) of creative power in Genesis, or of deceptive temptation, or of believing Abraham, or of holy Joseph, to be inspired. The care for and constant rememberance of God and religion manifested in "the Law;" the lesson of repentance and pardon through God's mercy, as taught in all the historical books including Judges and Chronicles; the piety and intense earnestness of the Psalmist and prophets; the patience of Job; the suggestive aphorisms of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; the simple and beautiful affection of Ruth; the truthfulness to human nature and to the principle of providential government in Esther, a book which never names God; and the important and, as all history strangely proves, the much required lesson of Canticles that the Creator approves the playful, virtuous fondness of the bride with her bridegroom—all these and countless other excellences, in the Old

* One of the nearest approaches to such a statement is Paul's expression (1 Cor. vii. 40.) "But she is happier if she so abide, after my "judgment: *and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.*" This certainly looks as if, whenever Paul wrote the expression of any of his strong convictions, he supposed such writing to be inspired: but two further observations, which should not be lost sight of in connexion with this passage, are, that manifestly Paul could not always—if he could ever—distinguish between his natural and his inspired thoughts; and that, just as on our principles we should expect, his doubt about the inspiration of any thought appears to be proportioned to the questionableness of the wisdom, utility and holiness of that thought.

Testament, and the matchless holiness of the New Testament, compel every man, who, like the Jews and early Christians, ascribes all that is good to the inspiration of God, to acknowledge that the Bible is an inspired volume, or—which is the same thing said in the Greek or Hebrew idiom—that the divine Ruach, the Pneuma of God, was in the writers and is in the writings of Holy Scripture.

It is noticeable, in connexion with the general subject of our previous chapters, that, not only does no sacred penman claim for his *writings* the character of inspiration, but, moreover, that the very idea of Inspiration, as it was held by the Old and New Testament writers, had not the slightest connexion or even compatibility with infallibility. For instance, what could be more profanely absurd than to call the inspired Samson infallible? Or, what could be further from Paul's meaning than to describe the Corinthians as infallible though he told them the Spirit of God dwelt in them, that is, that they were inspired—yea and though he even said of them (2 Cor. iii. 3.) that they were "declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered "by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the "living God, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy "tables of the heart." Here was verily an inspired *writing*, spoken of by Paul: yet no man says this writing, the Christians namely of Corinth, was infallible. The truth is, as has been observable to the reader throughout this chapter, that, amongst the pious Jews and the early Christians, the idea of Inspiration was wholly unmixed with the notion of infallibility, and was, *in addition to referring each good thing to God as its giver*, simply equivalent to what we mean by any or all the several words good, strong, orderly, wise, clever, inventive, brave, instinctive, holy.

The Difference between "Genius" and "Inspiration."

The difference between the idea of genius, in point of fact, and that of divine inspiration is, not in the result produced, but in the originator recognised. Thus we—referring Milton's Paradise Lost or Bacon's Novum Organon to the man who wrote each, (genius or creative thinker) or to the sprite that was in the man (genius, a heathen dæmon)—describe each of these books as "a work of genius:" but the far truer and grander mode of speaking would be to refer the creative power of thinking to Him, who alone made Milton or Bacon to differ from ordinary writers, and thus to call their books works of the Spirit of God, written by divine Inspiration. In this manner, without a doubt, David or Solomon or Isaiah or Paul would have spoken of every thing which may with propriety be called a work of genius or of cleverness, or of holiness.

When the reader has perused our next Book we shall not be justly chargeable with underrating the peculiar authority which, in consideration of its Inspiration and on many other grounds, attaches to the Bible more than to any book: but, in the meanwhile, this which we have written, seems to us to be the Bible's own teaching on the subject of Inspiration, namely, that every thing good in any book, person or thing, is inspired and that the value of any inspired book must be decided by the extent of its inspiration and the importance of the truths which it well (or inspiredly) teaches. Milton and Shakspeare and Bacon and Canticles and the Apocalypse and the Sermon on the Mount and the eighth chapter to the Romans are —in our estimation—all inspired: but which of them is the most valuable inspired document, or whether the Bible, as a whole, is not incomparably more precious than any other book, these are questions which must

be decided by examining the observable character and tendency of each book and the beneficial effect which history may show that each has produced.

CHAPTER IV.

THE USE OF THE WORD INSPIRATION IN ITS TRUE AND ANCIENT SENSE AMONG THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM.

THE materials for our definition of the true meaning of the sacred word "Inspiration" are now complete: but we wish, in closing this Book, briefly to draw attention to the undeniable fact that by us, Christians of all parties and denominations, in the nineteenth century, this word and its kindred or cognate terms are still employed, quite apart from all reference to infallibility, in their true, wise and scriptural sense as well as in that other sense in which an unhappy and superstitious confusion of thought attaches the notion of infallibility to whatever is inspired by the Holy Spirit of God.

Thus we find the Liturgy and the Articles of the Established Church in England employing the terms in such instances as the following:

"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all "desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts *by the inspiration* "*of thy Holy Spirit* that we may perfectly love thee "and worthily magnify thy holy name, through "Christ our Lord. Amen."—*Collect in Communion Service.*

"O Lord, from whom all good things do come, grant "to us thy humble servants, that *by thy holy inspira-* "*tion* we may think those things that be good and by "thy merciful guiding may perform the same, through "our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."—*Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Easter.*

"God, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of "thy faithful people by sending to them the light of "thy Holy Spirit, grant us *by the same Spirit* to have "a right judgment in all things and evermore to re-"joice in his holy comfort, &c."—*Collect for Whit Sunday.*

"Works done before the grace of Christ and *the "Inspiration of his Spirit* are not pleasant to God for-"asmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, "&c."—*Article XIII. On Works before Justification.*

In those passages we recognise the fact that the Reformed Church of England formally acknowledges the meaning of "Inspiration" to be the indwelling and assistance of the Holy Spirit of God in sinful and erring subjects. It would be easy to adduce very numerous quotations, from the published works of the most highly esteemed writers belonging to all the various sects in the Church, in which the same signification is attached to the words "Inspire" and "Inspiration:" but the matter is so notorious, and so without contradiction, that such quotations are not necessary. There is hardly a prayer uttered, in private or in public, without supplications for "Inspiration" as a boon which is asked of God for the poor erring mortals who urge the petition.

Do we believe that these prayers for the Holy Spirit to inspire us are ever fulfilled? Do we believe that these are vain supplications or not? Assuredly every Christian hopes and believes that this prayer, at all events—whatever may be the answer to our entreaties for temporal and material gifts—will have its response in the Spirit sent down from on high. Well, then, if such be our thoughts concerning these prayers, there must be some modern Christians—private Christians as opposed to ecclesiastical officials—our contemporaries if not ourselves, who are *inspired*. Yet where is the sane Christian believer who claims for himself, as a private, non-official disciple of Christ, the attribute of infallibility or who is prepared to concede that

attribute to another? That which should make this consideration the more startling, to one who upholds the popular idea of an infallible Scriptural inspiration, is that the prayers for the Holy Ghost, to which we are alluding, are urged at the throne of grace on precisely the same grounds as those which are chiefly relied on as an argument to prove inspirational infallibility in the New Testament writers. We put it to our reader's consciousness whether it is not on the promises of the Spirit contained in the fourteenth and two following chapters of John's Gospel and on the promise recorded in Luke xi. 13, as much as on any other promise of Holy Writ, that our modern teachers encourage us to hope that the Spirit of God shall be with us to comfort, to guide, to convince us and to take of the things of Jesus and apply them to our hearts?

If this be so, why should we expect Inspiration, given of old in accordance with those promises, to make the New Testament writings or writers infallible, while Inspiration, given now-a-days in accordance with, and in fulfilment of, the same promises, leaves us, and all modern Christians since some undefined epoch subsequent to the first century, inspired but fallible?

Definition of the Term "Inspiration."

Thus, after a careful examination of the Scriptures and after noticing the usage of Christendom, we conclude that although there has for many centuries existed a false and superstitious opinion in favor of inspirational infallibility, yet there still is recognised and admitted, among all believers, the ancient, Scriptural and only true idea of Inspiration according to which the term signifies *that action of the divine Spirit by which, apart from any idea of infallibility, all that*

is good, in man, beast or matter, is originated and sustained: and, moreover, we conclude that, if the internal contents and the historical effects of Holy Writ are grander and better than those of any other book, then the Bible must be regarded as the best and therefore the most richly inspired book in the world: and, yet further, we conclude that every thing, which has any divinely bestowed excellence (*i. e.* any inspiration) in it, is to be respected on account of its excellence *per se* and still more on account of that excellence being recognised as coming from God; so that, if the Bible be, as we believe and as we hope presently to show, the best and most richly inspired book, it will, as a consequence, be reasonably entitled to the devoutest reverence from all men who wish to be either good or wise.

BOOK IV.

WHAT IS THE JUST AUTHORITY OF HOLY WRIT?

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY MATTER.

SECTION 1.—*The Present Position of our Argument.*

In the course of the preceding pages we have seen that, whatever our educational prejudices or *a priori* anticipation may have led us to suppose, the facts which are apparent on the page of Holy Writ forbid our believing the Bible to be infallible. We have moreover seen that there is no more substantial or satisfactory reason for our expecting the Bible to be free from all error than there is for our expecting that every believer, who is influenced for good only by the Spirit of Truth, must be incapable of error and of sin. And we have also seen that only a misconception of the true ancient and pious idea of inspiration has led to the belief of the inspirational infallibility of the Bible.

These observations and reflections are, we know, to a great extent such as have been made and the truth of them demonstrated in other books and by far abler pens than ours. They are too, we are persuaded, for

the most part in accordance with the suspicions which have sometimes alarmed the intelligence of every thoughtful reader of the Bible. Such suspicions have, however, been deemed so dreadful and their supposed consequences so tremendous, that few pious minds, who loved God and loved Christ, have ventured to keep the eye steadily gazing on the light which, if looked at with the perseverance and fidelity of an unflinching truth-lover, would have revealed the simple and self-consistent solution of the enigma, *a Bible which is at once fallible, inspired and containing the very word of God.*

Section 2.—*Reactionary Disrespect of the Bible to be Eschewed.*

Hitherto we have seen the Bible's fallibility ; and we have seen that its inspiration is, in one main element at least, different from the present common opinion of British Christendom. A question now naturally arises as to the value of this fallible but inspired volume. The mere idea that the volume has some good in it and is therefore in some degree inspired, that is, that God's Spirit has been, to a certain extent at least, at work as a co-operator in its production, ought surely to command our reverential study of its contents. Yet, such is the effect of a shock to prejudice, that very possibly some may be ready to exclaim, "Tell me not of the Bible's Inspiration. If it be not "infallible how can it be an authority or a rule of "faith for me ? If the Bible be after all a book with "errors in it I care nought for it. If it lay at my "feet, in my path, I would not stoop to pick it up."

Such sentiments are not unnatural. We have known them expressed ere now : and we expect to hear them expressed again. But such expressions and such sentiments cannot endure ; for they are impulsive and in their very nature evanescent. They do but show the

rise, in him who is subject to them, of that astonishment in which, it has been said, that all philosophy has its origin.

Not stoop to pick up a fallible Bible! Are then the dialogues of Plato infallible? Are the words of Seneca's morality without error? Is the book of Newton's Principia wholly without mistake? Are the wisest statues of any realm infallible? Has the confession of Augsburg no liability to error? Is the English Book of Common Prayer perfect? Are all the lines of Protestant Hymn Books wise and holy and spotless? Nay was ever the correspondence of any human father with his child free from all blemish? But what should we say for the prudence or the piety of one who, because all writings, in which the mind and pen of man are employed, must be liable to err and in some things have actually erred, should therefore profess disregard and well nigh scorn for a parent's counsel, a country's laws, a church's rules or the maxims of a scientific teacher?

Similarly, if the Bible be fallible, may it not still contain instructions which shall be profitable to us? and should we not in it, as elsewhere, "prove all things "and hold fast what is good?"

Let us then lay aside all unholy and unphilosophical impatience and once more take up the Book of Books. If, on investigation, it seem to be free from error, we may honestly and happily hold our childhood's thought of Scriptural infallibility. If, on the other hand, the palpable evidence of the Bible contradicting Astronomy, Geology, Chronology, and, above all, contradicting itself, and sometimes, as in the case of Jael, contradicting the clearest principles of morality and religion—if evidence like this compel us to believe that in the Bible the errors of man are mingled with the teachings of divine wisdom and goodness, let us humbly and earnestly apply ourselves, by all the light which God and only God has given or shall give us,

to separate the wheat from the chaff, the good from the evil, the word of God from the thoughts of men.

SECTION 3.—*Only when intelligently comprehended can the most hallowed precepts be to us God's Word.*

THIS can only be done by each one for himself; for the holiest truth and the divinest wisdom cannot be God's word to any man until he perceive and know it for himself. The highest authority may say to me "*Tima ton patera kai ten metera :*" yet, until I know the meaning of these words, they are to me gibberish and not the word of God. But let the lowliest child or pauper say to me "Honour thy father and thy mother," and let those words sound in harmony with my inmost being—as they and I are created to be in harmony together—and then those terms, before unintelligible and only gibberish, become to me the very word of God. Thus it can only be by reading, marking, and inwardly digesting the word of God, which is abundantly contained in Holy Writ, that any man can perceive and know and learn the commandments of God even from the Bible.

CHAPTER II.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS URGING TO A STUDY OF THE BIBLE AS A MOST INTERESTING AND IMPORTANT DOCUMENT.

Now in this portiom of our Essay we propose to state very briefly, and only in the way of suggestion, some special considerations which claim a more than ordinarily attentive study as due to the Scriptures.

A.—The Bible's Antiquity combined with its present hold on the Minds of Men.

At the outset it will be felt that the lapse of ages causes the light and worthless portion of any literature to perish or to be generally neglected. If any book has survived the trial of a thousand years and especially if it still continue to be read by considerable numbers of human beings there must be in its pages some curious information, some mighty charm, or some singularly lucid statements which well entitle it to the careful investigation of every man who wishes for instruction. How forcible is this plea on behalf of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Their every page is hoary with more than millenial antiquity. They are read and re-read with professed and often deepening devotion by multitudes of men. They are read to bless the infant as the pearly drops from the baptismal font fall upon its brow and symbolize, ere consciousness be developed, man's universal need of a new birth, God's merciful provision for human regeneration and the parent's earnest desire and pious

resolve that the infant shall be taught to live in imitation of the sinless One. They are read to give a sanction to the teaching of the school. They are read as the lesson and the text in the congregation. They are read by the mother to strengthen her for her trials and soothe her in her anxieties. They are read by the stalwart man that he may be hallowed, calm and dignified amidst all the strivings of busy duty. The sorrowing and the bereaved read them that they may learn the consoling hope of reunion in a tearless world. Even at the gaping mouth of the tomb they are read that they may tell of victory over death and the grave.

Whatever may be the mysterious charm of the Bible's pages—the antiquity of that volume, combined with the unique freshness of the hold it has on the minds of countless readers in their most solemn and most earnest moods, bespeaks for it a study of no ordinary care.

B.—THE BIBLE THE ONLY BOOK WHICH, THROUGH THE AGES OF THE REFORMATION, THE SCHOOLMEN, AND THE FATHERS, IS POINTED BACK TO AS INFORMING US OF THE NATURE, ORIGIN, AND GROWTH OF PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY. D

ATTACHING too to its antiquity is this consideration. The testimony of heathen writers, like Tacitus and Pliny, is sufficient to show us that more than eighteen hundred years ago, in the reign of the emperor Tiberius, while Pontius Pilate was the Roman Governor of Judæa, a man named Christus* was the well-known

*"Christ, the founder of the sect commonly called Christians, "was, in the reign of Tiberius, capitally punished under Pontius Pi- "late the procurator; and this pernicious superstition was thus, for "a while, repressed only to break out afresh, not merely throughout "Judæa, where the evil originated, but throughout Rome also, where

teacher of a new religion at Jerusalem, that this man was crucified in the hope that his heresy might be stifled ; but that, instead of this hope being realized, upon his death the number of his disciples spread, within a few years, so as to have reached Rome itself and so as to count as an important sect in that metropolis, while, in the intervening provinces of the empire, the religion of this Christus had spread everywhere and drawn to itself votaries, in town and hamlet, of every age and of both sexes, so that the interests of the idol-makers and idol-worshippers were seriously threatened—not to say materially damaged. Now the remnants of this amazingly prevalent and suddenly spread religion are amongst us to this day ; and, with various intermixtures of Judaism and heathenism as well as of the patristic and scholastic theologies,

" things attrocious and disgraceful congregate and find many pa-
" trons."—*Tacitus' Annals*, xv. 44 : *written about* A. D. 110.

" Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a set of men attached
" to a new and mischievous superstition."—*Suetonius' Life of Nero, ch.* 16: *written about* A. D. 120.

The early prevalence of Christianity, and its historical origin with a Jew named Christ, are abundantly proved by these quotations from unfriendly and misinformed heathen writers. It is easy to understand how a religion, which inculcated the abhorence of all idols and the "*hating*" parents, friends and life itself, in comparison with the *love* to be borne towards the Deity ; and which, moreover, was accused of cannibalism because, in terms, it spoke of " eating flesh" and " drinking blood," should be so evil-spoken of by Tacitus and Suetonius. The true moral character of Christianity however, as well as its early prevalence, is shown in the following testimony of a wise and learned heathen, whose business it was to inform himself accurately on this subject. Pliny reports to the emperor Trajan (about A. D. 107.), Those, whom anonymous informers accuse to me as Christians, constitute " a vast multitude, of every age, and of both " sexes." * * * " The contagion of this superstition " has spread, not only through cities, but even through hamlets and " rural districts." * * * The worst that can be proved against these Christians is that " they habitually meet together, on a " certain day, before dawn, to sing a hymn to Christ as God, and to " bind themselves by an oath" (sacramento) " not to the perpetration " of any evil, but to avoid the guilt of theft, robbery and adultery, " and never to break their word or refuse the rendering back of that " which has been entrusted to their care."—*Pliny's Letters*, x. 97.

this religion of Christus or Chrestus (as some have called him) has triumphantly held its sway in the general course of the world's history from the days of Pliny and Tacitus till our own time.

Without at present referring to the badness or goodness of this religion, it must surely be an important problem for every student of his own human nature, and for all who wish to consider the possible relation of duty or otherwise in which we may stand to a Creator, to ascertain what were the original and pure ideas of Christus and his immediate followers by the dispersion of which they changed the worship of the civilized world and produced such a revolution as was then at all events without a parallel and as deserved, according to the testimony of the heathen historians, the astonishing description that "it had "turned the world upside down."

Where then are we to seek for the genuine principles by which Christus and his disciples or apostles effected this manifestly stupendous revolution? Is it probable that the system now called Christianity is identical with Christ's religion? Do all the sects which assume to themselves the epithet "Christian" rest their teaching upon the same principles as did Christus of old? If so, those principles should be common to all the sects: but if, on the other hand, many of the sects have quite different principles—some insisting on the authority of the Pope; some on the decisions of general councils; some on the written pages of the Bible; some on the inner light kindled by the Holy Spirit in every individual believer's mind; some asserting the unmixed sinfulness of human nature; some appealing to the good that is left in fallen man as the very stock on to which Christian excellence is to be grafted; some teaching the indispensableness of a human ministry or priesthood to the continuance of vital religion; some vindicating the sufficiency and independance of each member of Christ as in direct communion with the head of the

Church; some asserting, some modifying and some denying the everlastingness of future rewards or punishments—if thus the various sects have manifold and diverse principles of their Christianity, then how shall the inquirer decide which are the more recent additions or alterations? and which are the primal doctrines of Christ? What teaching was it that really checked the adoration of Jupiter and Venus and the other ancient deities? What portion of modern Christianity is a subsequent innovation which has, advantageously or otherwise, been superadded to that potent scheme which made probably—almost certainly —* as many converts to itself in the first fifty years of its existence as have been made for it in all the last eighteen centuries? Nay, how know we that the mysteries of the primal faith have not been wholly lost to us?

These are startling interrogatories and, apart from the antiquity of the Bible, we see not how they can reasonably or satisfactorily be answered. The slightest acquaintance with history suffices to show that Christianity has undergone at least two and probably three great transformations. In the sixteenth century that which we, both so-called Catholics and so-called Protestants, regard as Christianity underwent an historically manifest change. Out of the then current systems of religion and theology the mental difficulties and labours of Luther and Melancthon and Calvin and Zuingle and other suchlike men did, in the providence of God, develop the various systems which bear the generic title of Protestantism. In direct antagonism to this development of Christianity grew up the still more recent system which is Romanism. The

* Of course this statement is made proportionately not numerically. There are doubtless more millions of Christians now than there were in the first century: but does the number of modern Christians bear the same proportion to the world's present population as was borne by the number of believers at the end of the first century to the then existing population of the world?

Catholic church had embraced Wicliffe and many another, who thought as he did, until his opinions were thrown into form by the various theses, confessions and sets of Articles to which the first half of the sixteenth century gave birth. Then it was that a reactionary movement from 1545 till 1563 pronounced itself in the decrees of the Council of Trent. Thus from the more comprehensive Christianity of the fifteenth century all was changed. That, which had been the one—not unanimous but united—church then, was now divided into Protestantism on the one side and the Tridentine or Romanist system on the other. Which of these three systems was most like to or was identical with primal Christianity?

Or, yet again, the student of history is aware that, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there flourished those peculiar teachers who, from their views prevailing in the educational institutions or schools of that day, received the title of Schoolmen, while their doctrines were called the Scholastic and their whole system Scholasticism.

Scholasticism, in all its speculations, set much by the ancient philosopher Aristotle who, more than three hundred years before the birth of Christ, had been a sage and teacher among the Greeks. The philosophy of the Schoolmen based itself on what it, often most erroneously, supposed to be the meanings of Aristotle's various sayings. These sayings were the principles out of which, by logical processes of words, the Schoolmen deduced their sciences. It was the work of Descartes and Bacon and others, at a subsequent period, to teach the world that (whereas the pure Sciences, like Mathematics, might be learned by a *deductive* process in which the mind worked out logical courses of thought from certain first truths, called definitions and axioms and postulates) the mixed or practical Sciences, like Chemistry, Physiology, &c., must be learned by diligently observing the phenomena of nature, and thence gathering, by an *inductive*

process of reasoning, those general truths or principles the knowledge of which is Science.

If the physical sciences thus became mere wordy trash under the treatment of the Schoolmen, so also did they base the science of morality on verbal definitions until, to a lamentable extent, the eternal differences betwixt good and evil were lost sight of amongst the wire-drawn niceties of subtle theoretical disquisition apart from the corrective observation of practical common sense.

How fared Christianity in its course through the times of these Schoolmen? Were they so busy with the physical and moral questions mooted amongst them that they had no time to devote to religious inquiries? Far from this. The most renowned of the school authors draw their chief fame from the parts they severally bore in the disputations about Christ and Christianity then in vogue. The Schoolmen undertook to interpret religion on the principles of their philosophy. So they got at or perverted, as the case may have been, the various doctrines of the Gospel. They threw these doctrines into the form of propositions and definitions and then, as in other sciences, they proceeded from their definitions of the Godhead, the Trinity, the Incarnation, Justification, Predestination, &c. to deduce various schemes of religious science or Theology.* Thus Thomas Aquinas had his scheme: Duns Scotus his: The Master of the Sentences his: Abelard his: and each famous Schoolman his own system of so-called Christianity. In the ages which intervened between the twelfth century and the Reformation the various systems of these Scholastics were propagated, defended, and regarded by their several partizans, as each the nearest and

* The reader, who wishes fuller information on this interesting subject may well be referred to the noble volume of Bampton Lectures by the Bishop of Hereford; to Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History; and to Hallam's "Middle Ages" and "Literature of Europe in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."

most exact representation of what Christianity truly meant. How are we to know which of all these theologies was most like that of which Tacitus and Pliny wrote? How are we to know what portion of that which passes current in the present day as Christ's religion was really taught by Jesus? and what portion of it is the invention of these Scholastic word-jugglers?

Apart from the antiquity of the Bible we see no means of answering this interesting and surely not unimportant question.

An attempt to furnish an answer may indeed be essayed: for it may be asserted that the Schoolmen, who thus brought Aristotle and their own philosophical definitions and logical alembics to work in the teachings of what they were pleased to call Christianity, had opponents. If among the Schoolmen there was an Abelard there was also his sincere though bitter antagonist Bernard. If the Scholastics invented theological terms and definitions there were others who withstood them with the weapons of an earlier and perhaps simpler faith which they had received and which they held as the religion of Christ.

Let us then inform ourselves what were the teachings of Bernard and his coadjutors in their contest with the Aristotelian Schoolmen, and we shall thus possibly ascertain what where the genuine ideas of Christ by which he changed, for better or for worse, the religious opinions and practices of well nigh the whole Roman world.

This seems a plausible and promising method in which to prosecute our inquiry. But no sooner do we open the extant volumes of those who opposed the scholastic vagaries of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries than we find that these writers who should be the ortho-lox repellers of mediæval innovation, draw their ammunition and their weapons, to a considerable extent, out of the books of the so called "Fathers" of the Christian Church. These "fathers" then, who

were they? Five of them, and only five, were men who seemed to have lived in the same century as Christ and his Apostles. Of the extant writings of these five, who are known as the Apostolic fathers, only one book,* containing fifty short paragraphs or chapters, has any appearance whatever of being genuine; and this book of Clement's, his first epistle to the Corinthians, is so simple and practical in all its teachings that it does not harmonize with the system of Christianity either as we find it developed amongst the orthodox men of the middle ages or as it shows itself in the disputations of the Schoolmen.

But, besides these five not voluminous writers, of whose alleged productions so scant a portion has any semblance of genuineness, we find the opponents of the Schoolmen quoting with great reverence the decisions and opinions of countless "fathers." The Schoolmen must be wrong, it is argued by Bernand and his party, because they contradict the writing of Saint Augustin or Chrysostom or Athanasius or Hilary or Jerome or Clement of Alexandria or Cyprian or Tertullian or Origen or Justin Martyr or Irenæus or some other of the almost interminable catalogue of the "fathers."

The clue for unraveling our difficulty as to what was primitive Christianity does not seem nearer to us when we find that these "fathers" are quoted by the schoolmen as readily and apparently with just as much force as by their opponents. If Bernard brings six strong passages to help him from the pen of Cyprian, Abe-

* This is the author's opinion and in its favour many respectable testimonies might be adduced: but, if the reader think that all or any of the alleged extant productions of Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Barnabas and Hermas are genuine, we say, let this be conceded for the sake of argument, what then? Not only do the systems of mediæval Christianity differ *toto cælo* from the *visionary* compound—which can hardly be called a *system*—of the Apostolic Fathers: but the fundamental ideas of these very Apostolic Fathers (*e. g.* those of Clement and those of Barnabas or of Hermas) are as discordant as is possible. Who then, except the Bible, is to tell us whether the fundamental ideas of Mediævalism, or of Hermas, or of Barnabas, or of Clement are most like the real ideas of Christus?

lard is not at a loss for half a dozen as strong on his side of any question from another of the "fathers:" and, not unfrequently, from the very pages of the same "father" whose other words seemed opposed to Abelard. Possibly, then, these quotations from the fathers may have been unfairly or unskilfully adduced. Happily (?) the historian knows that vast masses of patristic literature are still extant. To the writings of Chrysostom and Austin and many of the others access is open. He may make another effort to ascertain under this guidance what genuine Christianity, as it came from the lips of Jesus, was. He may see what the fathers themselves tell him on this subject. But what will be his disappointment when he finds that among the fathers there were differences, as wide, to all appearance, as those which now prevail among the whole range of them that profess and call themselves Christians? Was not Augustin the Calvinist and Chrysostom the Arminian of the fathers? Were there not patristic millennarians like Irenæus and anti-millennarians like Origen? Were there not sacerdotalists like Cyprian and Presbyterians like Aerius, (then as now styled dissenters by the soi-disant orthodox Episcopalians)? Were there not among the fathers sticklers for the literal, grammatical interpretation of Holy Writ and others (*e. g.* Origen) who were in favour of a spiritual or rather (it should be said) an allegorical mode of interpretation? In a word, is Tertullian the only "father" in whose writings there remain clear marks of entire changes of opinion and consequent self-contradictions? Do we not find puerilities, self-contradictions, and sometimes immoralities in the writings of almost every "father," not even excluding Clement of Rome with his Phœnix as an argument for the doctrine of the Resurrection?

Thus, then, does history bring us to the very threshold of the apostolic age. It tells us that Justin Martyr, Origen, Augustin, Chrysostom and most of the influential "fathers" were, before their conversion to Christianity

more or less habituated in and conversant with the various philosophies of their times. It tells us that there were Judaizing tendencies early at work to corrupt, if possible, whatever may have been original Christianity. It tells us how Oriental dualism—with its twin rival spirits or powers of good and evil—strove to commingle itself with the religion of Christ. It tells us that, at Alexandria and elsewhere, Neo-platonism, or a revived and altered setting forth of Plato's philosophy, was mixed with Christianity. We read of Gnosticism, Arianism and innumerable other sects and heresies. We see that from the beginning there have been great corrupting influences bearing upon Christ's religion: but history, apart from the Bible, can rarely tell us how much of the modern conglomerate, called Christianity in this nineteenth century, came from Jesus and is in real accordance with his principles? or, how much of it is attributable to the Arian struggle of the fourth century, or to some other origin in thoughts and feelings most remote from, alien to, and out of harmony with the real mind and spirit of Christ.

This is a great problem. On the theory of modern Christendom—the theory, namely, that eternal bliss, or eternal damnation, depends, in the case of every individual, to a great extent, if not wholly, on each man's holding the orthodox creed in all its parts—it is a tremendous problem. But, apart from the specific interests of Christianity, this is evidently a great, an important and an interesting question.

It is amazing enough to contemplate Islamism in the seventh century slowly drawing its first few followers to a great and pure enthusiasm for the worship of the One God and then to see it when it takes the sword and propagates itself, by wondrous successes in battle, over a vast portion of the world. This is a sight for man to look upon with wonder. But in this religious revolution of a great part of the world one may trace cause and effect. There was a giant man, "a hero" as Mr. Carlyle would call him. His was a

noble zeal by and bye combining with military success. Those, whom Mahomet conquered, learned from him purer religion than they possessed before. He taught them discipline. He even attracted their sensualism by his "land of the hereafter :" and thus the followers of the Crescent became, for a time, a strong and fanatical army of religionists. How they naturally succeeded in spreading their religion, and how they were, in turn, as naturally checked, and their onward career for ever arrested, in one of "the great battles of the "world," need be no puzzle, but is a very noticeable series of causes and effects.

In our own times, too, we have witnessed a very remarkable religious revolution counting its scores of thousands of proselytes in an age of cheap literature, steam engines and electric telegraph. Here again, in Mormonism, there is much for the student of mankind and of religion to notice : but there is nothing which cannot be readily accounted for. We have it proved and confessed that Joseph Smith and several of his coadjutors were by habit and in character base cheats. We know whence their cunning fraud was supplied with Mr. Spaulding's curious religious novel which they perverted into the book of Mormon, and published as an alleged translation of the once lost but now re-discovered books of ancient Jewish prophets. We know how the initiated among them turned their position into a means of sordid gain and lustful indulgence. The promises of high wages, abundance, and the nearly approaching millennial glorly—the assertion of miracles which had been wrought by Mormonite Apostles—the appeals to dark and mysterious passages in the Christian Scriptures—the notorious persecutions which unhappily they could boast of as showing their sincerity and their zeal—these various stimulants, added to the terrible denunciations they are wont to utter against those to whom they seem vainly to address themselves in order to their conversion, are quite sufficient to account for the success Mormonism

has had in attracting to itself large numbers alike of the timid and the adventurous, the crafty, the hopeful, the emigratingly disposed, and the ignorant.

Thus there is nothing inexplicable in Islamism or in Mormonism. We know what each of the systems was: and we know the principles and means by which they extended themselves in the world. But in Christianity, apart from the antiquity of the Bible, we should know neither what was the religion nor what were the means by which it was propagated. Yet it still has its millions of votaries among the most civilized dwellers on this our planet: and we are assured it possessed itself of a large portion of the ancient world within fifty or sixty years of the death of its founder.

In all his historical researches one fact must have impressed itself on the notice of the student whose course we have been sketching. In all the critical epochs of Christian history, besides all other authorities such as the decisions of the schoolmen, the decrees of councils and the sayings of "fathers," there is a general and devout reference to the teaching of certain writings as the Holy Scriptures. These citations are doubtless made sometimes from the books we call Apocryphal as well as from those we acknowledge to be Canonical. But that does not effect our present argument which is that, always, the disputants and writers, back to the earliest remnants we have of the old controversy between the apologist Justin and the unbelieving persecutors, and in like manner also back to the genuine first Epistle of Clement of Rome, invariably refer to or quote from some one or more of the writings of Paul and the others who composed the several portions of our New Testament. We know that there are some New Testament books, namely the Apocalypse and the epistle of Jude, John's two last letters and Peter's second epistle, of whose canonicity there may be some doubt. And we know also that many quotations which are commonly said to be cita-

tions of our New Testament are manifestly references to the traditional "sayings of Jesus and his Apostles." But, all this notwithstanding, it is, we think, clear that well nigh every particular writing of the New Testament was quoted distinctly as of high authority before the middle of the second century. In other words, it seems perfectly certain that, in the lifetime of many who had been contemporaries of Paul and of John, almost every writing which now forms part of the New Testament had gained a wide spread reputation as a genuine and authentic account of what Christianity was and of the manner in which it was propagated. This much, indeed, is acknowledged by Dr. Strauss and many of those who, like him, have brought to this investigation the greatest learning and ingenuity together with the least prejudice and the freest habits of inquiry.

It should be remembered that we are not at present maintaining that the New Testament is a wholly reliable history of Christianity in its origin and growth. We simply maintain that history points back to this volume as the only repertory it knows in which we may learn what was Christianity and how it was spread. That the Old Testament, the book in whose reception both Jew and Christian have for eighteen and a half centuries agreed, is the book which Jesus and his followers read and preached from, at all events to their Jewish audiences, has already appeared most probable to us. This then is our case for the antiquity of the whole Bible as claiming attentive perusal. Without the Bible Christianity, in its nature and its first rapid successes, is unintelligible.

Heathen historians assure us of the fact of some religion having originated with Jesus and spread with surprising rapidity to a marvellous extent: but how did it spread? The voice of history tells us not. It says nothing of the sword helping Christianity till the reign of Constantine, more than three hundred years after the birth of Jesus. It tells us nothing of the

magic, the imposture, the fraud or the other means by which this religion spread. It merely testifies of the apparent unattractiveness, the virtues and the atheism (*i. e.* the freedom from idolatry) of the Christians, so that the gifted, accomplished and sagacious Gibbon can only surmise that, in a world which was bad enough to crucify Jesus and slay many of his most intimate associates, it was the goodness of Christianity which commended it to the acceptance of the gross and demoralised multitude.

We are not now prepared to gainsay this surmise: but, if Gibbon was right in this extraordinary supposition, we are the more interested to know what was the peculiar excellence of Christ's religion, as contrasted with the holy, hopeful teaching of Socrates and his disciples Plato and Xenophon. What was it that caused Platonism, as a purifier of mankind at large, to stagnate, whilst Christianity flourished? High morality, tolerable theosophy, and the doctrines of an after world, a judgment and even a resurrection of the body—these truths were clearly enunciated in the dialogue of the Phædo which, between three hundred and four hundred years before Christ, Plato wrote in Greece, the very centre of education for the ancient world. How was it that this religion—coming from so revered a teacher, in Athens, under the most favourable circumstances, and recorded in language than which no words can be more eloquent—fell almost still-born on the ears of man, whereas the religion of Jesus, from wickedly notorious Nazareth, in despised Galilee a district of remote and neglected Judæa,* went forth conquering and to conquer and has continued to hold its grasp on the mind of man? The only book, which professes to be able to give us information on this subject by telling us

* For a very attractive statement of the outward circumstances of Jesus, the reader is referred to the Rev. John Young's "Christ of "History," recently published by Longman and Co.

what primitive Christianity was and how it grew, is the Bible. We grant that the Bible which professes to give us this information is not infallible: but still, if even it contained many and great errors, it should, for its antiquity and for the reverence in which from of old it was held, be respectfully and most diligently examined in order that we may discover—if it be possible—some faint hint in its pages which may teach us the world-attractive secret of Christ's confessedly virtuous religion. If men ransack the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides and Tacitus to find any useful hints for conducting the policy and government of temporal states—if Galen and Hippocrates are still read by medical students in our day—if politicians seek wisdom and statecraft in the Politics of Aristotle and the Republic of Plato, how much more should we all search the Scriptures if haply we may find in their fallible records any still disregarded or unappreciated maxim of wisdom, morality and piety. Surely the sole and very ancient records of Christianity, as it came from Christ and his apostles, must ever be an object of most solemn curiosity to every thinking man.

In such reflections as these there is sufficient cause and ample guarantee for every intelligent man reading the Bible thoughtfully and in no light or irreverent mood. But tell such an one that he is to read that blessed book as the *infallible* word of God, and then, every time he finds an inaccuracy in the science, a discrepancy in the history or an error in the grammer of the Bible, he is shocked and his religious earnestness is likely to be chilled by the inevitable conviction that this belief in an infallible book is untrue. He is made occasionally unhappy by unbelief and, in proportion to the strength of his intellect or the depth of his devotion, he ultimately becomes a callous infidel, a weak and unsanctified believer, or in some rare cases a resigned but most unsatisfied Christian.

CHAPTER III.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS URGING TO A STUDY OF THE BIBLE AS A BOOK OF VENERABLE AUTHORITY AND AS A RULE OF FAITH.

A.—The Bible to be revered as the Handmaid of all great Modern Improvements.

Thus far, then, history and the antiquity of our sacred writings put in a reasonable demand that the Old and New Testaments (in common, possibly, with some apocryphal writings) should be studiously and not irreverently nor superstitiously examined: but the heading of this Book speaks of the *authority* of the Bible: and we are now prepared to proceed in asserting that authority. We have already shown good reason for serious study of the Bible. Our next step is to claim for it a reverential study. This claim we ground on a consideration that, if the Bible, as distinct from Christianity, has not always been the manifest originator of all civilisations in Christendom, it has at all events been their handmaid, and, without it, they have not prospered or been any great blessing to mankind.

1.—Of German English and Scotch Progress as contrasted with Spanish and Italian Retrogression.

We shall illustrate our argument by a reference to the period of the reformation. The human mind received a great impulse in the fifteenth century. The

printing press gave a novel power of disseminating thoughts new and old. The discovery of America and of the passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope quickened the spirit of mercantile adventure; and generally set men thinking freely and independently on all questions. The capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 expelled many learned men from that chief seat of the Eastern Empire and they travelled westward in search of safety in some new home. All the old wisdom of the Greeks these refugees had studied: and much classical lore and true philosophy they were able and willing to teach to any ruler or people who would receive them.

The beneficial influences of this impulse penetrated little into the rude and barbarous nations of Germany. It was to Italy—and mainly to fair Florence, the queen of cities, that the Greek refugees bent their steps. There Lorenzo the Magnificent, as afterwards at Rome his nephew Leo the Tenth, gave them joyful welcome. The Italian cities were full of all the best arts and sciences that then were attainable. Homer, the Greek tragedians, Horace, Cicero, Plato and Aristotle were all well known in the Italian courts and among the *elite* of Italian society. All seemed bright and full of promise. In Spain and Portugal, too, if there was somewhat less of literature and the fine arts, there were energy and power, active and growing amidst the golden walks of commerce with the East and with the newly discovered West.

In Germany, in England and in Scotland all was dark. Anticipation pointed to an immediately glorious future for the realms of Italy and Spain: but, for the countries north of the Alps, the prospect seemed dark indeed.

Yet how has the fair promise of Italy and of Spain, the lands where the Bible was overlaid by interpretations and traditions, been disappointed! How has history been amazed by the intelligence and improvement of Germany and Scotland and England, the lands

where the Bible, hitherto only known by a few garbled extracts, and buried in its dead languages amidst the rubbish of monasteries, did suddenly, by various agencies in the providence of God, spring to light in its entirety, without authoritative commentaries, and in languages which were native to each realm. Mark how, in the language of the historian Macaulay, Romanist territories are said to be distinguishable from Protestant:—"From the time when the barba-"rians overran the Western Empire to the time of the "revival of letters, the influence of the Church of "Rome had been generally favourable to science, to "civilisation, and to good government. But during "the last three centuries, to stunt the growth of the "human mind has been her chief object. Throughout "Christendom whatever advance has been made in "knowledge, in freedom, in wealth, and in the arts of "life, has been made in spite of her, and has every "where been in inverse proportion to her power. The "loveliest and most fertile provinces of Europe have, "under her rule, been sunk in poverty, in political ser-"vitude, and in intellectual torpor, while Protestant "countries, once proverbial for sterility and barbarism, "have been turned by skill and industry into gardens, "and can boast of a long list of heroes and statesmen, "philosophers and poets. Whoever, knowing what "Italy and Scotland naturally are, and what, four "hundred years ago, they actually were, shall now "compare the country round Rome with the country "round Edinburgh, will be able to form some judgment "as to the tendency of Papal domination. The descent "of Spain, once the first among monarchies, to the "lowest depths of degradation, the elevation of Hol-"land, in spite of many natural disadvantages, to a "position such as no commonwealth so small has ever "reached, teach the same lesson. Whoever passes in "Germany from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant "principality, in Switzerland from a Roman Catholic "to a Protestant canton, in Ireland from a Roman

"Catholic to a Protestant county, finds that he has "passed from a lower to a higher grade of civilisation. "On the other side of the Atlantic the same law pre- "vails. The Protestants of the United States have left "far behind them the Roman Catholics of Mexico, "Peru and Brazil. The Roman Catholics of Lower "Canada remain inert, while the whole continent round "them is in a ferment with Protestant activity and "enterprise. The French have doubtless shown an "energy and an intelligence which, even when misdi- "rected, have justly entitled them to be called a great "people. But this apparent exception, when examined, "will be found to confirm the rule; for in no country "that is called Roman Catholic has the Roman Cath- "olic church, during several generations, possessed so "little authority as in France."—*Hist. of Eng. vol* i. *p.* 48, *3rd edition*. These words of the liberal historian we thoroughly adopt and we add to them this remark that, wherever there is Protestant well-doing its characteristic is an open Bible among the people. Wherever there is the modern blight of Romanism, there is either a suppressed Bible, or one unwillingly* given to the people and accompanied by authoritative interpretations. Thus then it appears that those states which in the sixteenth century started in the race of modern civilisation with every advantage except a popular love for and knowledge of the Bible have sunk into political insignificance, have lost their intellectual and commercial pre-eminence, and have oppressed their subjects into a condition of habitual sloth, inactivity and vice, varied by occasional outbreaks of rebellion. While, on the other hand, those states which, at the commencement of modern civilisation, seemed to be the lowest, the least and the last, have in the meanwhile obtained, and generally learned

* A reluctancy of this unwillingness manifests itself, not only in the advice of Priests, but in the high price at which the Douay Bible is offered for sale in comparison with the *tenpence* for which an English Bible, according to the received version, can be purchased.

to love, the Bible ; and have likewise made favourable progress in other respects until they are the very leaders of all that is noble, generous and refined. We acknowledge that many causes have been at work co-operating to produce such a change of position among the nations of Europe. We do not assert that the Bible has been the sole cause of this change. But it does appear to us quite noteworthy that there should be such an unvarying experience of improvement in people who revere and study the Holy Scriptures, and of debasement in those who neglect or know not those hallowed writings.

2.—Of the English as Contrasted with the French Revolution.

Let us, however, take another illustration. The oppressions of feudalism and the iniquitous tyranny of monarchs brought on at different times political rebellion and revolution in England and in France. In each country the course of events had its great resemblances and its striking contrasts.

Among the resemblances, even of detail and not only of principle, it may suffice to name the facts that Charles I. in England and Louis XVI. in France were both slain by their subjects: and the established church in each country was, for the time at least, overthrown. The duration of the English Revolution was complete in forty-seven years if we count, as should be done, from the rebellion in 1641 to the accession of William of Orange in 1688. The French Revolution, if we suppose that which is much to be wished, came recently to its completion, after a duration of rather more than sixty years. Thus each national struggle for its own amelioration was continued during about half a century. There are many other—and of those not a few important—points of

resemblance between the two Revolutions: but we content ourselves with the notice of these. Now, on looking to the points of contrast, we find that, whereas the issue of the French Revolution is a military and sacerdotal,* despotism with a strict censorship of the press—such a despotism, indeed, as would be wholly intolerable but for the wisdom and magnanimity of the present Emperor—in England the result of the Revolution was a constitutional Government; in which the elected Representatives could alone propose or impose taxes; in which the generosity and nobleness, that should and for the most part, perhaps, do attach to high birth, are allowed to bear their part in giving a tone to our policy and legislation; and in which the Monarch rules on definite conditions and with wise and liberal stipulations. Our Revolution left us perfect freedom of person and of thought—that freedom being only so far limited in any direction as to prevent its becoming palpable, injurious licentiousness. Thus, in their *results*, these two great national movements are strongly contrasted.

In the course of the French Revolution, not alone were Paris and Lyons, and the provinces generally deluged with the blood of civil feud in the too famous Reign of Terror, but Europe was made a dreadful battle-field where at one time Republican Propagandism fought for victory and at another the vast ambition of a genius, disciplined in all things save spiritual self-government, grasped at world-wide power. In the course of the English Revolution there were, as is inevitable in a Revolution, dreadful struggles on the field of battle and great sufferings in sieges, but the army was so disciplined that, even during civil war, there was little that could be called disorderly violence. And, when the rebellious Revolutionary party had driven their adversaries from the field and estab-

* I say "sacerdotal" because of the influential aid which it is no secret that the emissaries of the Pope in France give and receive in the highest quarters.

lished themselves in power, they so bore themselves in the administration of affairs at home and abroad that in their own country were safety, industry, peace and prosperity, and in every foreign land the flag of England was dreaded or respected. Thus again in their *courses* these national changes were marked by wide differences.

Another contrast between them was that, in France, they who from time to time bore the chief power replaced the religion they overthrew first with Atheism, then with a Deism to which Robespierre added the meretricious ornament of a goddess of Reason, and lastly with a discredited but politically convenient Romanism. In a word, the French Revolutionists essayed to ignore God and do without religion; but, finding this impossible, they tried different sorts of divine worship, in none of which was the Bible recognised as a familiar and popular instructor. In England, on the other hand, the religion, which was displaced, was one which professed to regard the Bible as the best teacher in the world; and both the parties, who had a share in the overthrow of Episcopacy, not only professed a deep reverence for Christianity, but avowed their disregard for and opposition to every authority which did not base its claim to man's submission on the Bible and the Bible alone.

Here, then, in the honour or disregard of the Bible, was another manifest and most marked contrast between these two Revolutions. We are far from saying that the study of the Bible was the only cause why one Revolution was conducted with comparative order and little violence—why one Revolution made England's position among the nations glorious and useful whilst the other embroiled France with all the rest of Europe and brought a foreign army of occupation into the streets of Paris—why one country obtained civil, political and religious liberty, while the other was subjected to absolutism and a censorship of the press: but we do think that the ancient and, as we have

already seen, curiously interesting Book, which was thought unworthy of attention or even deserving of scorn by the *French* Revolutionists, and which was constantly and intimately revered as a divine authority by all the parties of the *English* Revolution, must be read with a feeling of deep reverence by every intelligent, truth-loving man who has even such a smattering of historical knowledge as is implied in the statements just made. And the more deeply any student shall prosecute this investigation the more, we are persuaded, will he learn to read the Bible, not only with the intensest curiosity, but with a deepening reverence. For instance, if he looks into the episodes of cruelty which disgrace even the English Revolution, he will find that the unutterable horrors practised by Kirke and by Judge Jeffries in his Bloody Assize were instigated by a Prince who regarded the Bible as only a safe book when one read it under the guidance of a priest, who should interpret its precepts in accordance with patristic and scholastic theology as sanctioned by Popes and general Councils: and he will find that the infamous Claverhouse, who slaughtered the Covenanters and gloried in applying the boot and the screw to some unhappy heretic, seems to have been himself wholly regardless of the Bible, whilst he too was an instrument in the hands of the priest-ridden James and his profligate predecessor Charles II.

3—Of the Charitable and Missionary Enterprises of the last Half Century.

Yet again we may take another illustration of the manner in which the Bible has been present and influential in a great national improvement. Within the last half century consider how this realm of England has been transformed with reference to inebriety

in the wealthier classes and with reference to profane and indecent language. Consider how Societies, for domestic and foreign purposes of charity, have sprung up and multiplied. Consider the Sunday Schools, the National Schools, the Ragged Schools, and the Reformatories. Consider the Female Penitentiaries, the Institutions for the Deaf and Dumb and for the Blind, and consider all the multitudinous Missionary Societies; and then let the question be asked what is the one Society on which all the others draw, of whose help all the others avail themselves, and in the support of which well nigh all the individuals and sects, which are divided in their approbation and patronage of the other societies, unite as in at least one visible bond by which their religious fellowship is shown? Consider what is this great and central Society? The only answer consistent with the demands of truth, is, the Society for printing and disseminating the Bible without note or comment. Can there be a doubt of the beneficial effects of the charitable revolution in this country? Are not those effects visible in the men and women who have been reclaimed from vice or healed of disease? in the spread of education and intelligence among all orders of our community? and in the increasing sympathies, benevolences and liberality of our own hearts?

In producing this charitable revolution, as it may well be called, who have borne so great and influential a part as those whom the historian of enthusiasm styles "the Clapham Sect?" The "Evangelical" party—however we may protest against and deplore their egregious errors—must be acknowledged as chief workers in this undertaking of the half century: and assuredly it needs no argument to show that the Bible and the Bible only is the shibboleth of this party. Here again then the Bible, if not the only cause of this revolution, has been a revered subject of study and source of guidance among those who

have been the chief—almost the sole—accomplishers of this excellent work.*

If now, from the chief movers of this charitable machinery at home, we turn our gaze to the mode of operation even in regions far remote from us, we find that, with the Moravians in their glorious work of civilizing and elevating the Esquimaux, the Greenlanders, and even the miserable leprous Africans, the Bible has been a conspicuous text-book. So too in the non-conformist Missions to the South Sea Islands. So too in the American Missions to Syria and other parts of the world. So too with the English Church Missionary Society, in its wonderful work of humanizing and educating and sanctifying the recaptured slave negroes at Sierra Leone, and in its work of almost Apostolical rapidity in converting the cruel cannibals of New Zealand in 1826 into the peaceful, intelligent, corn-growing New Zealanders of the present day. In all these instances and in many more the Bible is put forward as the chief instrument by the missionaries who accomplish the several works. It is the Bible they translate; the Bible they teach and preach; and the Bible which, with the Divine blessing, produces the effect which all men can see and in which all good men rejoice.

Such being the manner in which we find, for centuries past and in our own day, that the Bible has been either itself producing manifold and great advantages to man, as is confessed among the Missionaries, or else has been the cherished and revered companion, guide and comforter of those who have, with wondrous wisdom, conducted mighty revolutions,

* If any reader be inclined to ask, Why then interfere with this Bible which, in the hands of the "Evangelicals," has been called *infallible* and has effected so much good? our answer is, Because we love this blessed Book and would fain not see it exposed to ridicule by being called infallible; and because we are persuaded that the Bible, in its *true* character of an inspired but fallible book, will do all its present good work and a great deal besides, which now this false name "infallible" prevents its accomplishing.

through their feverish and abnormal stages, to legitimate and most blessed conclusions, what wise or thoughtful student will spurn the Bible? nay, what thinking man will not take up this Book of Books with a respect and a preparedness to assent to its maxims and conform himself to its suggestions which he yields to no other book until at least he has studied its pages and closely examined for himself its wisdom or its folly?

On these Grounds Scriptural Authority is Maintainable.

This is the way in which we are prepared to claim from all wise and earnest men a reverence for the as yet unopened Bible. To this extent we assert the *authority* of Holy Writ independently of any examination of what, or how mysterious, or how natural, may be the contents of the sacred volume. Let a clear-minded and conscientious man open the Bible with these and *only* these sentiments of veneration for biblical authority, and he will not be amazed and horrified into scepticism and incredulity if he find that, in this spiritual mine, the veins of precious ore, however rich and however numerous, lie imbedded in a preponderance of common earth, are for the most part hidden by a deep covering of worthless, though perhaps curious and interesting, strata, and generally must be dug for with assiduity.

If Infallibility be Claimed, Authority is Insecure.

But reverse the position. Tell the serious, strong-minded student that the book he has been taught by history to revere, is, not only a good and holy book

containing the word of God to man, but is the *infallible* word of God in which there is no error, the word of God, only so spoken through man's instrumentality as the musician's thrilling tones are produced by the agency of an organ. Tell man so when he is just about, for the first time in his life, earnestly, with the thirst of curiosity and the reverence of admiration, to open and read the pages of his Bible—Tell him so of the book written by the Spirit's dictation and of its consequent freedom from all admixture of human error, and we do not say that you will at first do more than intensify his awe and augment his solemn veneration of the mysterious volume. But he presently opens the book and in its first page he learns, or is confirmed in, the glorious, heart-affecting truth that matter had a beginning and that the spiritual Self-existent, whom we call God, was its and our sovereign creator. Our student is charmed, as Longinus and every man of judgment has been, with the religion-inspiring record of the creative word "Light be and Light was." The declared beneficence of the God who saw the good which was in all his work and who blessed every thing that He had made, sounds as a noble truth in the student's ear, a truth which sets him on much humbling self-examination and on much solemn reflection. Thus far our student can appreciate the singular honour that the wise and great have so often and so conspicuously given to the Bible: but, alas! you have told him that the Holy Book is infallible; and, before he passes from its first page, he is led to believe that the heavens and the earth and all the host of them were made in six days, whereas the indelible testimonies of matter, sense and reason combine to assure him that, this earth, with all the various populations that have in its younger days dwelt on it and perished in its ruins, is countless millions of years old instead of being less than 6000 years of age as the received scriptural chronology would represent it. Then, moreover, our student finds that, according to the

account in Genesis, there was light and there were the alternations of day and night, and the processes of vegetation were carried on, before that fourth day whose special product was the sun and moon and stars. Here and at the close of each day's earnest study of the Bible our student finds himself amazed to understand how an infallible book can cantradict the notable truths of science, or how it can sometimes even contradict itself.

He reflects and strives to extricate himself from the mazes of obscurity in which his devotion is being numbed no less than his intellect is puzzled. But even the power of reflection cannot solve the mystery of an infallible book with errors in it. In this state of mind multitudes of men are habituated until they become dead to all practical sense of religion and spirituality.

Too probable Course of a Student Misled by Errors in a Supposed Infallible Book.

Under some circumstances the troubled student may ask advice from his clergyman. In which case too many pastors will tell him, as the ultimate result of their own reading and experience and belief, that God's word (by which they mean the whole Bible) must be true though all science and every man should be a liar : and thus our enquirer is left with the two opposing statements only more vigorously contradicting one another since the clergyman was consulted. On the one side are ranged the senses and intellectual faculties God has given us, the world God has made, and the lessons these senses and faculties learn from the world so made : this is scientific truth. On the other side are the statements of a Book, which, without proving their assertion, men declare to be *infallible* and therefore authoritative. What a combat is

this which must be fought in the mind of every man of ordinary seriousness and intelligence! If in our student the religious ideas are much stronger than the intellectual powers, superstition will prevail, and he will believe the Bible's infallibility in spite of evidence and in spite of misgivings which, with reference to Papal or Ecclesiastical infallibility, the pen of Archbishop Whately has thus depicted:—"But this free-"dom from all uneasy doubt,—a desire for which leads "to that craving for infallibility I have been speaking "of,—this, after all, is not always attained by such a "procedure. A lurking suspicion will often remain, "—which a man vainly endeavours to stifle,—that "the *foundation* is not sound. The superstructure in-"deed may be complete. Once granted that the church, "sect, party, or leader, we have taken as our guide, is "perfectly infallible, and there is an end of all doubts "and cares respecting particular points. But an un-"easy doubt will sometimes haunt a man,—in spite of "his efforts to repress it, and however strenuously he "may deny, even to himself, its existence,—whether "the infallibility claimed, which is the basis of the "whole fabric, be really well established. A suspi-"cion will occasionally cross the mind, however stren-"uously repelled, *Is there not a lie in my right hand?* "And the reluctance often shown to examine the foun-"dation, and ascertain whether it is really sound, is "an indication, not of full confidence in its firmness, "but of a lurking suspicion that it will not bear ex-"amining."—*Search after Infallibility. p.* 315. *3rd Edition.* If, however, the mind of our student is logical rather than reverential in its tendencies and habits, unbelief of biblical infallibility will take hold of him and he will probably regard himself, and, as far as he is really known, will be regarded by others, as an unbeliever even of Christ's maxims and hopes. Thus, we are persuaded, numbers of men lose much of the advantage and benefit of the grandest means of

spiritual culture and mental development which has ever been introduced into the world.

If our student had been left to reverence the Bible as likely to be the best and wisest of books, and had he not been told it was infallible, its errors would have been traced by him to their right sources in the ignorance of its human authors and in the darkness or barbarism of the times referred to, and he would have found no extraordinary or insurmountable difficulties which should act as stumbling-blocks either to his religious trust or to his intellectual integrity. If our student be told by his pastor or friend that the Bible is fallible in all subjects except religion and (perhaps) morality—apart from the fact that the Bible contains obvious errors and self-contradictions even on these subjects—we opine that our student will find no small discomfort and obstruction in ascertaining which subjects are religious and which are not religious? and to which category, fallible or infallible, those subjects belong in which, as in the miraculous conception and the Incarnation, history and religion appear inseparably blended?

This mode of playing fast and loose with infallibility, although it is upheld by learned and reverend men like Bishops Whately and Hinds and many others of its patrons, ancient and modern, does seem to us most unsatisfactory and perilous; unsatisfactory, inasmuch as many of its distinctions between the religious and the profane are wholly arbitrary and correspond to no real differences: perilous, because the practice of recognising distinctions in serious matters, where there are no differences, is a lesson in casuistry or, in other words, a lesson in the art of finding excuses and making palliations which disguise the hideousness of crime and decorate the ugliness of vice. Where a barrister knows that he is by casuistry merely juggling with words in order to mislead twelve simple-minded jurymen he may possibly derive no harm from the practice: but, if a man, as he reflects

in his secret holy of holies, may say, The history and science of the first chapter of Genesis are not infallible for they are not a subject of religious instruction except in so far as they embody the principles, Matter had a beginning : and There was one self-existent Creator : why may not the same man say that he deems the historical evidence for the miraculous conception insufficient to support so stupendous a dogma : the history in the early chapters of Matthew and Luke is, he thinks, not infallible for it is not religious instruction except in so far as it embodies the principles Nothing is too difficult for God ; No sacrifice is too great for his love to make for our good? Now to hold the former of these positions, in reference to the Mosaic narrative of the creation, as is commonly done by the writers of a certain school, and yet to abjure and disavow the latter position with reference to the evangelical account of the miraculous conception, seems to us a distinction without a difference, a case of unsatisfactory and perilous casuistry. On such considerations as these, as well as because it is untrue, we reject this mode of vindicating an infallible authority for Scripture by allowing that the Bible is fallible in the "temporal accidents of spiritual things," but asserting still that it is infallible in the spiritual things themselves.

Recognition of Scriptural Fallibility the Student's only Safe Course.

We hold that position to be alone safe and alone true which acknowledges that we can conceive of only one Infallible and that is God. All else, that we know, is fallible, that is, mixed with error or liable to err. The authority, then, that we claim for the book which has been from of old so revered and which is still so generally represented as a teacher of all that is

good, useful and happy—this authority which we claim for the Bible, because of its reputation, from every man, even before he opens the book or has read or heard a syllable of its contents is, not that he should expect to find infallibility or freedom from error in the whole book or in any part of it, but that he should study it with the same kind of reverence combined with discriminating judgment of the good and the evil, the wise and the unwise, with which he would listen to a father or a mother whom, though far from infallible, Providence or God had given him as his divinely appointed teacher, guardian and authority.

To one who reads in this frame of mind, each saying of the Bible will be respected till it has been sifted; and even "the weak and beggarly" parts (to use Paul's expression) will be looked upon with filial fondness for the sake of those richer thoughts and teachings and mercies with which they have been associated. Thus, accounts of the creation, histories of Samson or of Jael, and narratives of angelic songs or miraculous conceptions, must each be judged, and held fast if it be good; otherwise, be thrown away as weak and untrue: but, still, the book will be the venerable book which alone is likely to teach what was the religion to which the Roman world was converted by Jesus and Paul and others of old—still the book will be revered as that which is doing and has done such a vast amount of good: and, as our student reads and marks daily more and more, he will discover increasingly what we shall now endeavour to establish, namely that the contents of the Bible are such as, notwithstanding Jewish prejudices and fables and all other real or conceivable draw-backs, still place the Bible at the head of all literature sacred and profane.

B.—ARGUMENT FOR THE AUTHORITY OF HOLY WRIT, FROM ITS BEING EQUAL, AT LEAST, TO THE BEST EXCELLENCES OF THE MOST CIVILIZED HEATHEN RELIGION.

WE think it may be shown that—great as are many of the excellences in heathen philosophy—the religion of the Bible is not surpassed even by these. It is too common for men who call themselves Christians, and even Christian teachers, to misrepresent human nature in general, and the heathen philosophers in particular, and then to show how far beyond humanity and philosophy the religion of Christ, as taught in the Bible, carries us. We are willing to believe that these misrepresentations of the heathens proceed most frequently from ignorance and not from any purpose of pious fraud: but surely they, whose business and sole occupation is to teach religion in this enlightened age and in the most refined societies of Europe and America, should be at the pains to ascertain what was truly the religion of the ancients before they risk their own reputation and, to a great extent, disparage the credibility and efficiency of Christ's religion by assertions about heathen philosophy which can be seen to be false by any man who reads the cheap translations of the classics which now abound in every large book-shop.

It is unnecessary for us to quote the words of Aristotle, or Cicero, or Cleanthes, or Seneca, or of any number of good heathen writers. Our purpose is to show that there are in the Book, which records the origin, nature and growth of the religion of Jesus, superiorities by which it far transcends any other religion: and, in order to attain this object, we shall first give as fair a representation as we can of that religion which, being incomparably the best of Heathen systems, professes to be derived from Socrates and is handed down to us by two of his disciples, in

the rich dialogues which Plato wrote and in the lucid memoirs (memorabilia) that Xenophon bequeathed to mankind.

It is impossible to say how much of this system originated with Socrates, how much he borrowed from his predecessors, or how much really came from Plato and Xenophon. We shall speak of the whole system as that of Socrates.

The rule for life according to this philosopher was justice and integrity towards all men, and piety as consisting in reverence towards the gods and not altogether excluding a compliance with the popular custom of sacrificing to the various deities. The highest attainable condition for man, and indeed the approved work for which his Creator destined him, was the strengthening and purifying his intellect, or rather his soul, by deep researches in geometry and mathematics, and by contemplating those abstract general conceptions which Socrates designated ideas, and which he regarded as the only glorious *realities* which, existing in the Divine mind, were merely reflected in the base, corporeal shadows that the vulgar deem solid and substantial. In modern phraseology, Socrates would say, The laborious, the mechanical and the practical are mean: but man's highest aim, which I confess can be attained but by a few, is to think little of food and dress and venery and all sensuous gratifications, and rather to occupy himself in the pure contemplation of truth and knowledge of every kind. When life is drawing near to its close, the just and pious man has nothing to dread in death. The good and pious philosopher may even rejoice.

It is difficult for anything to surpass the exquisite beauty and calm propriety with which, in the dialogue called the Phædo, Socrates is represented as dying a martyr to the truth he had taught and a forgiving witness to the cruel wickedness of his countrymen who, on a charge that he was corrupting the youth of Athens by teaching them atheism and impiety, condemned him

to die by drinking the poisonous juice of the hemlock. The Phædo is the death scene of Socrates. In it he takes leave of his wife, descants on the most solemn truths with his numerous friends, converses kindly and in tones of generous forgiveness with the poison-bearer his own executioner, drinks the deadly draught, and then gently dies in converse with his sorrowing friends.

In the course of this scene Socrates asserts his perfect readiness to die. He shows no fear nor any doubt. He speaks of happiness which, as a just and pious lover of wisdom, he hopes to attain in passing from this world to another where the same deities rule and where he looks forward to the society of beings as good as any on earth, and where he may even meet the just and holy and wise men of former generations. He here alludes to the future judgment; and in another of Plato's dialogues (the Gorgias) Socrates indicates his own view of that future judgment in a charming apologue which tells how the gods, to prevent fraud or injustice occurring by kings and great men and hypocrites appearing to the judges better and fairer than they really were, ordained that in the judgment the departed should not come before the judges in the dense and often deceptive integuments of flesh and body, but should be stripped of all *appearances* in order that the ordeal might be gone through, not merely face to face, but *soul to soul.* Such and so searchingly righteous was the future judgment in which Socrates believed. From this tribunal Socrates taught that there were three awards. Parricides and the worst of criminals were plunged into Tartarus from whose miserable shades no weary soul might ever find escape. Bad men, whose guilt however was of a lighter hue, passed into another probationary world after they had endured for an indefinite period the fiery discipline of purgatory. Good men were, after judgment, admitted to that holy and better world

into which Socrates rejoiced to think that he was about to pass. This is, we think, a fair though, of course, a very inadequate summary of the excellences of the Socratic religion. It will be manifest to the reader how incorrect are the interpretations we often hear popular theologians put upon such words as those of Paul in which he says that Jesus "brought life "and immortality to light." Our present object, however, is not to condemn the maligners of heathen philosophy but to show that—excellent as was much, very much of what Socrates taught—the Bible yet surpasses, far surpasses its every excellence, and, on this consideration, is a worthy authority for our moral and religious guidance in life and, in this sense, a rule of faith to us.

In prosecuting this part of our subject, our first inquiry may well be whether there is any point in this summary of the chief excellences of Socratic religion which has no equivalent in the doctrines of the Bible. As a rule for life the Bible, teaching men to love all others as themselves and do to others as they would others should do to them, is certainly equal to the Academic demand that one should be just. The Bible teaching man to love God, with all his heart and all his mind and all his strength, is not surpassed by the requirement of piety which we have noticed was made by Socrates.

We are not afraid to set the abstract refined philosopher, who is the beau ideal of Academic humanity, in comparison with the account of him who was reputed to be the son of a carpenter at Nazareth, yet who, as a boy, thought so deeply that all, who heard him partaking of the catechetical instruction of the doctors at Jerusalem, were filled with wonder at his knowledge and sagacity. Our ideal man too was, like Socrates, a teacher. He spoke with such power and love, to the common people as well as to his immediate followers, that they heard him gladly and felt that his words carried with them the weight and au-

thority of convincing truth. His conception of the highest aim for man was to witness to the truth, to go about doing good, to be filled with love even of one's foes, and rather to minister to the wants and happiness of others than to seek their ministrations for ourselves. Such was his ideal of human excellence and he persisted in it to the last, even praying for and excusing his enemies while they put him to a most cruel and ignominious death. In comparison with the Socratic hope in death the Bible tells us that friends were taught to rejoice that the Son of Man was going to His Father; and, again, that men may rise to such a condition as to feel that death, which implies a crown of glory and the holiest and most enduring companionship with God and angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, is, in a selfish point of view, preferable to life.

As to the spotless purity and thorough searchingness of the future judgment portrayed in the Bible, nothing can be more solemn or more grand. In that day the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed and every man shall receive according to his works as indicating his disposition and habit of mind and heart. The award was threefold in the Socratic belief, everlasting, purgatorial, blissful.

The Bible contemplates a twofold award. The righteous shall go into eternal happiness and the wicked into eternal misery. It knows nothing of a purgatorial state *after death*. As to the duration of either of these eternal states the Scriptures give no limit: but, rather, there is in their language much ground for the opinion, which some have not hesitated to express, that eternity is a term descriptive of a state, an epoch or a dispensation, rather than of duration or any other idea that has reference to time.

If never-ending torture is threatened for the wicked, either in the writings of Socrates or Scripture, this may, possibly, be of use as terrifying some from vice who otherwise would perpetrate it: but it is a

hopeless effort, to attempt to prove by reason the *excellence* of such a doctrine, for it appears irreconcilable with the idea of Divine mercy, inasmuch as we cannot even conceive any good purpose which would be attainable by the ceaseless torture of the sorrowing culprit when the righteous will be, by the hypothesis, beyond danger of imitating his guilt, and the unrighteous too, will be past the power of being benfitted by the warning of his example. In this respect then we regard the Bible as being at least on a par with the belief of Socrates.

Thus the Bible furnishes us with religious instructions and hopes which are, without doubt, wholly equal, if they are not in many respects superior to, the brightest excellences in the religion of Socrates.

C.—Argument for the High Authority of Scripture from its having Excellences which contrast with the faults even of a Socrates.

Our investigation now forces on us the painful task of inquiring after some of the observable faults in the Academic system and then presenting, in contrast with these, a few of those excellences in the religion of the Bible to which we have not yet drawn attention.

In reading Plato's Republic we are surprised to find that all poetry would have been excluded from the idea of human and social perfection by that Socrates who made such frequent use of quotations from the poems extant in his day, and who, in all but the rhythm of metre, was himself a poet full of exquisite imaginations and writing with the sweetest melody of diction. Yet so it is, Socrates would have annihilated poetry in order to develop man. We take exception to this on two grounds: first, inasmuch as we believe poetry and its gentle loving ways, or its wild stirring emotions, to be as influential in the refinement and elevation

of the human soul as any instrument which can be used in education. Who, that knows Homer or Æschylus or Horace or Juvenal, has not learned from them thoughts and truths which have come home to his inner man with a force unparalleled by any other and which has made their lines of feeling or of wisdom to be engrafted as a portion of our very selves? Expel the writings of Chaucer, Shakspeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Tennyson, Scott, Dickens and Thackeray from our English literature and who, that has studied these writings, does not know that we should be losing that which is an inestimable advantage to the populace hardly less than to the *elite?* Yet no poet—that is no writer of fiction—would Socrates have tolerated in his model Republic. Let him, who can imagine what the Bible, without its parables, without the psalms, without the best chapters of Isaiah, and without its other poetical portions would be—let such an one say whether the forbidding of poets and poetry was not a grievous fault in the Academic system: but we take exception to this maxim of Socrates still farther, on the ground that it necessarily implies a narrow and most illiberal conception of humanity. It implies no less than a censorship of the press and a mutilation of man's faculties. God has given to his creature imagination and taste, which is capable of delighting in the products of imagination: but, forsooth, we must emasculate ourselves, at least, as far as a taste for poetry is concerned. This is a notion surely unworthy of *philosophy* which teaches us that every passion, every affection, every faculty and every sense, has its proper object, and that, each being duly and proportionately exercised in accordance with reason and in subordination to conscience, we may delight ourselves in the gratifications alike of sense, and mind, and spirit, while we happily and with thankfulness remember that God "has given us all things freely to enjoy." Here is what we regard as a fault in Socrates. There is no parallel to it in the Bible where poetry and

fiction, often of the highest class, abound ; and one of whose generous, large-hearted maxims we have but just quoted as summing up the grateful and pious decision of philosophy's broad mind.

Another fault we grieve to find in the good old Socrates is that—whatever may have been the clear belief of his own intellect—however he may have seen and sometimes spoken of the absurdities of Polytheism till he was entangled in the charge of Atheism—however he may himself have adored one great and ever present Deity—he yet dallied with the idolatry and Polytheism of his day. Not only did he allow that, for the multitude, there was piety in worshipping gods many and lords many : but the last act of his death-scene shows what a hold the educational prejudices of superstition still retained upon his mind. His last words to his friends were a charge that they should, on his behalf, offer the accustomed sacrifice of a cock to the god of medicine, Esculapius.

Thus did Socrates fail to make a decided stand against Polytheism and idolatry in favour of the spiritual worship of one God. In comparison with this his defect we need hardly remind the reader that the Bible is distinct and firm in pronouncing on the worship of the one true God as indispensable to virtue and to happiness.

But, it may be questioned, possibly, how far this winking at Polytheism was a fault in Socrates. We are clearly convinced on this point ourselves : but the subject is too large to be now discussed in detail. One set of reflections, which bears strongly on the decision of our own judgment, is all that we can at present suggest to the reader. No maxim in Ethical science is drawn from a larger historical induction than that, As is the deity of a nation so will be the character of the nation. Let the popular mind entertain the notion of gods like Priapus or Aphrodite and lechery, pæderasty and general bestiality are sure to characterize the multitudes who worship at such shrines. Let Wodin be a

god in the estimation of any people, and his devotees will not fail to be cruel and bold. Now, if this maxim hold good, all Polytheisms must have a bad moral element in them, for no system of many gods in any religion can be found in which some of the deities are not believed to be mean and vicious. And, yet again, among the crowd of divine personages, the mind of man is confused. The suppliant is at a loss to know from which divinity to ask for help or to which to offer thanks; and. so the religious sentiments are blunted and lose their freshness, their reality and their joy. Besides, what may be pleasing to one deity is displeasing to another; and thus even the differences between good and evil, virtue and vice, become necessarily obscured: revenge is not acceptable in the eyes of one god, but it is dear to the heart of another. Whatever crime man may be drawn to by his impulse, he can find favour for it from some of the assemblage of heroes, saints and deities.

This dallying with Polytheism then, which is so strongly denounced in the Bible, we assert to be a grievous fault in Socrates.

Another and, if possible, a still more obvious charge against Socrates is that he did not teach worthy notions regarding the dignity of women or the solemnity of marriage. The cold, passionless, almost scornful way in which, at the opening of his death-scene in the Phaedo, he dismissed his wife from his companionship and, as it appears, from his confidence,* before he be-

* Phaedo, Cebes, Krito, and several other disciples, are introduced into the prison-cell of Socrates. They find him there attended by his wife Xanthippe and his child. As these disciples enter Xanthippe "sees them and begins to cry aloud and say such things as women, "indeed, are wont, as, for instance, O Socrates, this is the last time "thy friends will speak to thee or thou to them. Then Socrates "looked at Krito and said, O Krito, let some one lead this women "(*tauten*) away to her home. And certain of Krito's attendants led "her away in the midst of her cries and lamentations: but Socrates "sat down on the couch and began to rub his leg," which he had raised and crossed upon the other, whilst he descanted on the absurdity of that which men call pleasure.

gins to teach and solace his male associates, is in marked contrast with the manner in which Jesus, agonizing in the torture of the cross, still tenderly remembered to provide, in the house and guardianship of the beloved disciple, a home for her who had been his virgin mother and his adoring follower.

In the Republic Socrates recommends such a community of wives and children as must degrade woman, put an end to the sweetest earthly happiness of domestic love, check the healthy growth of population by the effect of certain well-known physical laws, and, in a word, bring general and deep demoralization into a society all whose men and women would be, in their earliest infancy and childhood, trained, influenced and moulded by mothers who, as exchangeable wives, or rather as licensed concubines, could not be otherwise than despised and self-despising.

It is needless to dwell on the enormous evils which every reflecting reader will see would flow from such an institution—so eccentric and so enormous that one is only amazed how any sane man—not to say how a philosopher like Socrates—could for a moment have seriously contemplated it, much less deliberately propounded it, as a custom for a perfect state. It is equally unnecessary to insist on the well-known fact that, here again, the Bible contrasts most favourably with the teaching of the Academy. The obvious instruction of Holy Writ is that each man should have one wife; that husbands and wives should love each other with the utmost fondness and fidelity; and that, as a general rule, "young women should marry, bear "children, guide the household and give none occasion "for reproach." So sacred is the matrimonial relationship considered by the Bible that it is even selected as a fit emblem of the union betwixt Christ and his Church.

The last fault of the Academic teaching, which it will be necessary for us to notice at present, is the partiality with which it regarded mankind and the

indifference it manifested as to the propagation of the truth. This partiality is apparent from the kind of life which Socrates represented as most approved by the gods; for it was impossible that all men, or indeed that any very considerable number of men, should abandon productive labour and give themselves up to the mere speculative contemplation of numbers, proportions, and the Academic doctrine of ideas. Yet this, as we have said, was what Socrates regarded as the highest condition attainable by man on earth. How does this fanciful notion contrast with the Biblical precept "Whosoever of you will be chiefest "of all, let him be the servant" (*i.e.* the profitable and helpful minister and fellow-worker) "of all"—as if it were said, if any man be ambitious for the highest possible human state, the way to satisfy his ambition is to be of the utmost use, in the friendliest manner, to the largest number of his most needy fellow-beings. As to the indifference about disseminating known and precious truth, of which we have accused Socrates, there is a most striking illustration in the death-scene to which we have already referred so often. The transcendent opinions, which the philosopher then promulgated, took his hearers quite by surprise. They had listened to him for many an hour before; but such teaching they had never heard even from his lips ere now; insomuch that one of the interlocutors in the dialogue gives utterance to his astonishment in words to the effect, "And were you, Socrates, about to have "died without imparting to us these invaluable truths "if a casual interrogatory had not elicited them from "you?" Surely this negligence in communicating the highest truth even to the most intimate associates—this cold indifference to the interests of the masses—or, if it be despondency, this hopeless abandonment of the ignorant multitudes to the besotted course of their confessedly brutish ignorance and obstinate vice makes a sorry appearance when set in comparison with the Biblical command "Go and tell the glad tidings of

"salvation to all nations," for, as the Bible elsewhere asserts, "God would have all men to be saved."

Such, then, are some of the chief and, as we think, very important blemishes in the religious and philosophical system of Socrates. We charge him with an injurious and narrow-minded intolerance of poetry; with a mistaken and degrading complaisance, if not a weak and superstitious clinging, to the prejudices of Polytheism; with an unnatural disrespect of the female sex combined with the most atrocious theory of co-habitation; and, lastly, with listlessness as to the spread of truth even among his disciples and still more among the countless multitudes of his fellow-beings. These are no light faults or slight accusations. We make them with no unfriendly or irreverent feeling towards the greatest and the holiest of the Heathen. We make them in the interest of truth, and to show, not only that the teaching of Socrates had its very grave errors, but still more to demonstrate that the Bible has its peculiar teachings of religious wisdom and excellence which stand out in marked and prominent contrast when viewed in juxtaposition with the Socratic defects.

On these grounds then we claim for the Bible a still higher degree of reverence. It has, at least, a counterpart for each of the characteristic excellences of the noblest ancient religion: and, where that best and purest of ancient religions was at fault, the doctrines of Holy Scripture abound in wisdom and holiness. For the ancient writing, which has been the handmaid, if not the cause, of all great improvements for centuries past—which alone is likely to tell us by what mysterious power Christus accomplished the religious revolution that Tacitus and Pliny ascribe to him—for that ancient writing which equals the greatest perfections of heathen philosophy and soars in the region of purity when the brightest of other religions lies low in feebleness and error—for this writing we claim from every man, not that it should be regarded

as infallible, but that its every statement should be received with reverence and judged with searching care and humble sincerity ; yea, and that even its errors should be dealt with as one deals with a father's failings or a mother's weakness. Such is the authority we reasonably, and therefore hopefully, claim for the Bible. Let no man say that this is a mean or insufficient authority unless he is prepared to say likewise that all legal, princely and parental authority is worthless, weak and despicable because it may be marred with error.

D.—Argument for the Sacred Authority of the Bible from its great and often unique Excellences.

It now only remains for us to notice, cursorily, a few of the peculiar and, for the most part, unique excellences which distinguish the religion of the Bible.

Section 1.—*Is it fair to point to the excellences and not to display the alleged faults of the Sacred Volume ?*

But here some objector may take exception to our course and say that, as we have paraded the special shortcomings of the Academy, so we ought, in fairness, to give conspicuous prominence to those questionable examples or instructions in the Bible of which it may be said there are not a few, like Abraham's readiness to slay his son under a persuasion that Jehovah could be pleased with a human sacrifice ; like the dreadful commands to exterminate man, woman and child among idolatrous Canaanites ; like the idea that God bore vengeful malice against a generation of the Amalekites for the sins of their forefathers apart from

all consideration of their own moral character: like the idea that, for David's sins, God on one occasion destroyed the life of an innocent babe, and at another time sent a plague to slay unoffending multitudes; like the untruthfulness of men generally approved in Scripture as were Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and others; like the cruelty and folly of Jephtha in supposing that sanctity could be given to a rash and improper vow by immolating his own daughter; like those horrible expressions in the Psalms according to which one may rejoice in the calamities and even in the blood of enemies and may be called happy for dashing children against the stones of Babylon—Why, some objector may ask, not parade these as blemishes in the volume of Holy Writ and acknowledge that there is much that should modify the eulogistic terms in which you speak of Scripture? To such an objection we have a ready and we hope a satisfactory answer. Let it be granted that all these accusations can be supported and that others like them may be too well-founded, on the way in which Scripture praises the wisdom of Solomon who at one period in his life had a thousand wives and concubines; or on the gross and offensive stories of Judah and Onan; or, yet again, on the indelicate expressions which, when they occur in the public lessons of the congregation, most clergymen feel constrained to omit—what then? If we acknowledge that all these and other similar matters look like lamentable faults in Holy Writ, must we not at the same time see that, against every immorality or impiety, Scripture raises its own voice? Does not the Bible itself teach, in some part or other of its own volume and especially in the New Testament scriptures, such pure lessons of love, usefulness and piety as supply a thorough antidote against the utmost acknowledged error which may be contained in its darker pages? What fault is there in the Bible, from the falsehoods or indecencies of the patriarchs, onwards through the follies of

stories like that of Samson, down to the later imprecations of evil against enemies, which is not distinctly rebuked by one or more of the Bible's heart-affecting and holy maxims?

To this our supposed objector may rejoin that, After all then, the Bible appears to contain contradictory principles some of which are manifestly evil whilst others are as manifestly good. This, we think, is a harsher and more unkind statement of the case than the facts of the Bible warrant: but we are content, in order to strengthen our argument, to accept this overdrawn representation of the case. Even on the supposition that there are in the Bible contradictory teachings, some in favour of good and some in support of evil, the first characteristic excellence of Holy Writ, which we are about to lay before the reader, is one which goes far to remove the difficulty that seems to lie in this objection.

SECTION. 2.—*The first characteristic excellence of the Bible is its inculcating the practice of Eclecticism.*

IN the Bible we find precepts such as these, "Prove "all things, hold fast that which is good:" "I speak "as unto wise men judge ye what I say:" "What-"soever things are true, whatsoever things are vener-"able, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things "are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever "things are of good report, whatsoever things are vir-"tuous, whatsoever things are praiseworthy, think on "these things:" And again, "Be ready always to "give an answer to every man that asketh you a rea-"son of the hope that is in you:" And, yet again, "Be-"lieve not every spirit, but try the spirits whether "they are of God." Now, on the strength of these and many other suchlike maxims in Scripture, we assert that one of the chief excellences and peculiarities

of the Bible is that it inculcates the principle of general eclecticism, that is, of picking out all that is good and rejecting all that is evil. Of course it will be easy for theologians to bring forward texts, spoken by Paul and others, when they were using every possible means to carry conviction on any subject and to persuade men's minds—texts, spoken or written under such circumstances, in which *authority*, in common with every possible topic that could be made available for persuasion, is made use of. But, against all such attempts to assert or enforce teaching on authority, we put it to the thoughtful mind whether precepts, like those at the head of this paragraph, are not in their very nature paramount and supreme—whether there is not in the human mind such a divinely constituted nature that the moment you appeal to man's consciousness, his inner sense of right and wrong, his own power of judgment, you awaken within each individual a knowledge that this judgment, of self and for self, is his prerogative inalienable, his responsibility inevitable? Only once say, home to a man's heart and understanding, You are your own judge: God's vicegerent conscience is within you: *Judge for yourself*—once say this so that a man shall hear it; and he is for ever afterwards God's freeman. You may, by *reason*, convince his judgment and so convert or change his views: but by *authority*, of priest or church or book, you can never again guide his mind. Though he were a slave before, he has touched the English shore and he is free and, with his emancipation, he must take charge of himself.

Scripture, as we have seen, does often tell us of this supreme inner power of judgment. It appeals to us as wise men who can judge and who ought to act on our own judgment in rejecting what is evil, though an angel should be its teacher, and in holding fast the good, which we approve, whencesoever we may have derived it and whatsoever it may be. If there be any virtue or any praise in anything whatsoever—in the

Bible, in Plato, in Confucius, any where—of that thing we should so clearly think as to learn hope, ay firmer hope in God, from its excellence—of that thing we should so clearly think and judge as to be able to state the grounds of our judgment to any of our brothers in humanity who may deem it worth their while to ask us a reason for the hope which is in us. Thus then, on all sides, the Bible religion teaches us to observe the good and the evil in order that we may reject the latter and hold fast the former. In a book, which teaches us this principle, we cannot be at a loss how to deal with the case of one who, passing for a true prophetess, pronounces a treacherous murderess "blessed among woman:" and our casting away from us all approval of treachery and murder becomes the more manifestly in accordance with the general purport of the book itself, when we read, in many of its pages, such precepts as "Do no murder," "Speak "the truth in love," &c.

So too, if we had in juxtaposition, "Yea, blessed "shall he be that taketh thy (Babylonish) children "and dasheth them against the stones," and "Be not "overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," we should still have no difficulty in knowing that it became us to keep ourelves free from the spirit of the former passage and to be filled with the gentle, loving spirit of the latter. Or, yet once more, if in one part of a volume the evil practice of divorce were made easy and almost attractive, the faithful soul would clearly see that a more golden truth was written in another part of the same volume where it is prescribed "That which God hath joined together let no man "put asunder." Thus then, whatever else some portions of the Bible may appear to say, the irrevocable word of God has gone forth, even from the shrine of Holy Writ, that man must patiently exercise, throughout all his life long day of grace, the habit of general eclecticism, choosing and assimilating as part of himself whatever he finds of good in anything, and cast-

ing away from him whatever he finds of evil even though it shine resplendent with all the glory of an angel of light.

This principle of eclecticism we recognise as a true and necessary instruction with a view to the utmost human improvement. As such it seems to us a special excellence of the Bible: and by it every semblance of difficulty appears to vanish, which might otherwise arise from the fact that the different portions of the inspired, venerable and authoritative book are barbarous, or wise, good and gentle, just in accordance with the character of the several ages or persons whence they originated. On account of this principle then, which we find in Holy Writ, we the more revere the Bible and are the more prepared to receive its every statement with the profound respect due to the highest authority, until we may have diligently investigated and obediently judged each such statement.

SECTION 3.—*Again, the Bible teaches that God is every where energizing.*

ANOTHER excellence in Scripture, which leads us to entertain a high sense of the Bible's authority, is that it thoroughly recognizes and constantly reminds us of the imporant truth that God is every where living and every where acting. What a check in time of temptation to know and feel that neither the brilliancy of light nor the clouds of darkness, neither the height of loftiest heaven nor the depth of profoundest hell, can for a moment conceal our most secret thought from the eye of God! What an encouragement in every virtuous toil, to be assured that the Almighty works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure! In every sorrow, in every joy, in every change, the Most High is with us every where making all things work together for good to them that love him and to

them whom He has called! He maketh, He guardeth, He counteth the lilies, the sparrows, yea the very hairs of our heads! Surely these are truths about God which can be felt. To this effect the Spirit doth bear witness with our spirits. Surely these ennobling, purifying truths about God cannot be too often or too solemnly called to our remembrance. It is because, from beginning to end, the Bible is ever reminding us how we live and move and have our being in God, that we are the more prepared to regard it as a precious book that teaches on the only well-grounded authority of "Choose the good and reject the evil."

SECTION 4.—*The Bible emphatically teaches that "God is Love."*

FROM what other book but the Bible is it that we learn the grand mystery, which, when taught, is so simple and so perceptible a truth, that God is love, and that, if at any time He should appear to us otherwise than, in His very essence, Love—if at any time He should appear to us as a jealous or a terrible God, or as a consuming fire—it is not because He has changed His nature: but because we are viewing Him through the various media of our different sins and our chilling sense of guilt. The child, whose disobedience is as yet only known to himself, looks at his loving parent with a vastly different association of ideas from those which, ere he had transgressed, lighted up the eye with joy as it met a father's smile. Even so, let man, in innocence or in the undoubting assurance of pardon, look at God and he will see that his heavenly Father is Love. If God appear to us in other guise, it is because we have surrounded ourselves with some hideous transparency of sin and guilt, and the light even of that father's love only serves to bring out in more abhorrent shape and more

dreadful colour the deformity that we have devised by our own wicked imaginations and executed by our unmanly because unholy acts. Where so well as in the Bible can one learn this mystery of the Divine nature being love? And, if this be so, should not this same Bible be to us an authority the more regarded and the more beloved?

SECTION 5.—*The Bible teaches in the way of concrete exemplification rather than by the statement of abstract principles.*

ANOTHER peculiarity which augments our filial esteem for the Book of Books is the method by which it proposes to reclaim man from ignorance and vice. If the reader has ever attempted to make the nature and the praise of any abstract idea, such as truthfulness or beauty, intelligible and charming to a class of youngsters or to an audience of rustics, he will quite understand why Plato's best dialogues have never fastened themselves on the popular mind. Not even the eloquence of Plato's style could make the unlettered masses, or indeed any but well trained intellects, attend to the line of thought by which the immortality of the human soul is logically deduced, as Plato represents Socrates to have deduced it, from some maxim about the harmonies of musical sounds. Such an argument is, or seems to the common sense to be, far-fetched. Lecture any mixed assemblage on abstract thoughts, and you will find how soon, by unquiet restlessness on their seats, by turning to gaze at each other, and by various unmistakeable signals, they show you that you have lost their ear and that your words, however long and eloquently you may continue in your present flight of oratory, will neither convince nor convert men whose hearts and wills are not open, nor are opening, to your persuasions. Now the

method, be which the Bible proposes to convert the world, is the very opposite of this abstract mode of address. Throughout Scripture you have narrative which, whether authentic or fictitious, is constantly replete with obvious and most useful principles. Even when the biblical theme is the eternity before this world's creation; or the divine nature and attributes; or the fall of man and the origin of mundane evil; or the mode of the divine government; or the way in which God shows that He is on loving terms with us and only seeks that we should be reconciled to Him; or whether predestination be touched upon; or any other subject on which man's tongue and pen are so prone to grow abstruse and metaphysical; rarely indeed do you find any approach to such wearisome disquisition in the sacred writings. There, almost all the teaching is given not abstractly but in the form of history and narrative. Beautiful appear to us in this light the unscientific history of creation by Elohim, the often absurdly ridiculed talking of the serpent, the naming of all things by Adam, the stories of the Deluge, and of Babel, and of Joseph, and so many other exquisitely wrought and instructive tales of the pious Jewish literature.

But, if, regarded in this light, the parables, fables, dramas and histories of the Old Testament charm and instruct us, what shall we say to the living portraiture of the man Christ Jesus? True, his historical features are only given us in the faintest and most sketchy outline. True, of his thirty or more years of life *in* the world but not *of* the world, we have, in the four Gospels, only a few brief and imperfect memoirs. Rarely have we any thing approaching to a full record of any one sermon or conversation of our blessed Lord. Rarely can we ascertain the connexion of circumstances in which he spake words, much of whose meaning would be determined, and could only be determined with exactness, by the peculiarity of the occasions which his extraordinary life was constantly develop-

ing. Rarely can we tell the order in which the events of his life occurred. But little, very little of his biography do we possess. Multitudinous unwritten sayings of his were afloat in the first century, besides that one which the Book of the Acts of the Apostles has alone preserved, "It is more blessed to give than "to receive." But tradition by word of mouth has lost these precious sayings or they have been so altered as to be wholly unrecognizable. Thus scant are the recorded and only trust-worthy memoirs of Jesu's life. Yet, what a character, what a soul do these few, brief, disarranged memorials call up before the mind! It was, we think, poor Rousseau, who, having been made an unbeliever by being shown a caricature of Christianity, said that, if the Evangelists did not describe a life and character which had been really seen by them, their conception of Jesus was no less than divinely sublime. Such is the incomparably loveable Lord whom the Bible suggests to the imagination and the adoring affection of us all. If he speaks as a teacher it is, for the most part, in some telling reference to the living customs of his day, or in a clear and lively story called by us a parable, or in associating with the daily bread and the refreshing liquor, no less than with the cleansing water, such spiritual meanings as should, were they not deadened in rituals, for ever speak to us of our souls and tell us how the inner man needs what God has provided and is abundantly willing to bestow—purifying as by water, strengthening as by bread and refreshing as by wine. Such a Lord and such an only Meditator the Bible sets before us for our love, for our worship, and for our imitation. After this it would be vain for us to tell of Paul, the writer of those letters on all the questions and difficulties which moved the minds of believers at Rome or Corinth or Thessalonica or Philippi or in the churches of Asia or Galatia. It would be vain to speak of John's dream (Apocalypse) in which he saw foreshadowed struggles between truth

and error, sometimes seeming doubtful in their issue, but all finally resulting in that perfect apocalypse or manifestation of the sons of God, for which Paul said the very creation ("all the whole creation") groaned in the travail of expectation; which Peter could only describe as a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness; and which John, like the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, dreamed of as a new Jerusalem which he saw coming down from heaven.

How graphic is all the Bible teaching. There is nothing abstract, dull and wearisome about it. The sacred volume is full of life and action, from Genesis to Revelation: and, in all its action, it has principles —eternal principles—of truth and goodness displayed so plainly as to be easy for every pious reader's observation. This then is another characteristic excellence of Holy Writ. This is what has always made the Bible a favorite book with the simple and the unlearned as well as with the accomplished and the ingenious. This is the method by which the Bible worthily executes that profoundly wise and humane command by which, if it were the only point in his history which remained to us, Jesus would be gloriously distinguished from all who taught religion or professed philosophy before him, for he *realized* the prophetic anticipation that the multitudes should hear glad tidings gladly, and he left the noble command, to all that follow him, "Speak forth the heavenly "message to the poor." For this, among its many characteristic excellencies, we esteem the Bible greatly and deem it worthy to be to us an authority.

SECTION 6.—*The Bible prescribes, not the Revolution of outward violence, but a silent and sure Reform from within outwards.*

No sane man, of the most ordinary information, will deny that, with all its supposed errors, the Bible has been a great Reformer. Yet how comes it that whilst every other Reformer, from Micaiah the son of Imlah downwards to Luther and Peel, has received a liberal share of abuse for his reforms, the Bible, on whatever other grounds it be assailed, is rarely—if indeed it ever has been—taunted with the character of the changes it effects in nations or in individuals? We think that this tolerance of Bible reformations arises out of another peculiar excellence of scriptural teaching. The Bible does not come into a Popish country and produce revolution by ordering outward insults to the established usages. Even in the Old Testament there is a striking instance of this, in the indulgence, which appears to have been asked and not refused to Naaman, with reference to accompanying his master into the temple of Nisroch. Thus the Sacred Scriptures do not enjoin rebellious iconoclasm in order to remove idolatry: neither does the Bible command sudden and baneful emancipation in a slave-holding country. Indeed, in whatever outward circumstances the Bible finds a man or a people whom it converts, in the same it would have them continue till the slave, by Christian industry, wisdom and thrift, can purchase his freedom; or till, in any case, the outward position and circumstances are raised and improved as an effect or result attending the mental or internal improvement of the individual or the multitude. In a word, the Bible, as a reformer, is no revolutionist. It works on the heart and mind first: and then, certainly, though gradually and in an orderly development, the outward carriage, the countenance, the whole man or the whole society is ameliorated.

For this its power of reforming peacefully, by slowly leavening whole kingdoms with its loving principles, we reverence the wisdom of the Bible and are prepared to respect its authority.

SECTION 7.—*The Bible requires from each man change of mind which shall be effective of change of life.*

CONNECTED with this point, of the Bible being a Reformer of the mind and the feelings and so, and only so, a transformer of the outward life, there is another consideration which strongly commends the wisdom of the inspired volume to our admiration. We allude to the fact that, with reference to the future judgment, as generally in order to be approved by our Creator, the sacred penmen do not demand certain operations to be accomplished by man, nor a continuance for a certain period in the paths of duty and devotion: but, rather, that which is required is that the thoughts and affections, which had been in various ways and to various extents engrossed and debased by selfish and inferior interests, should be, once for all, transferred to right objects and in due proportions—that God, as the subject best worthy of attention and of thought in the universe, should be first looked to and then that all minor affairs should range themselves, in our estimation, after Him and with respect to His good and sovereign pleasure.

This transformation of the mind must always have its critical moment, which critical moment or real period of conversion can seldom be ascertainable by man: but whenever it take place, this change, from loving self or the world best to loving God and goodness best, is that which Scripture represents as essential to being approved in the Judgment. Now let us ask ourselves by what other means it is conceivable that men, who have passed large portions of their

already bygone lives in the errors of sinfulness, could ever hope to commend themselves to the all-seeing eye in judgment? If the Bible, addressing itself to the hoary sinner, spoke of pardon as obtainable after ten year's improvement, he would despair and go on in sin: but it tells him to believe and repent and then "old things will be passed away; behold! all "things will be new." It shows him the thief, with a changed and renewed heart, accepted on the cross. It fills every man who still has life with the assurance of pardon, if he will turn and live, for "God hath no "pleasure in the death of him that dieth:" but, at the same time, it stimulates every child of man to instant exertion by showing him that, though the present is ours and we can now change, we know nothing of the future nor have we any reason for soothing ourselves with the idea that at another moment we shall still be alive or, if alive, still be able or then be willing to change our hearts. Thus the Bible offers present pardon on the condition of actual and immediate change of heart. It insists not on work, of any quality, or for any period. Yet it relaxes not one whit of the highest claim for moral purity and philanthropic usefulness, for, if the heart be rectified, will not the actions, which are prompted by the heart, be likewise as surely rectified? To the oldest and most hardened sinner there is pardon proffered. From the youngest thinker there is happy service of perfect freedom demanded. On the one hand, the promise is, "Be- "lieve and thou shalt be saved." On the other, the warning is, "We must all give account of the things "done in the body." Surely in thus requiring a change of mind, which may be instantaneous, and yet whose fruits of holiness cannot fail to follow, the Scripture shows that wisdom and that mercy which commend themselves to our conscience as divine: and so the Bible lays another solid foundation on which may be raised an additional claim to our reasonable veneration for its hallowed though fallible authority.

SECTION 8.—*The consummate knowledge of Man and of the World shown by the Bible Writers.*

WE are not of the number of those who believe even the prophetic portions of Holy Writ to be "anticipa-" ted history," as they have been styled. The prophecies we regard as poetical and therefore, for the most part, impersonated or individualized statements of the moral principles on which the world is governed. If Edom is named in a prediction, we do not consider that Idumæa is destined, by an inevitable fate, to a certain curse: but rather we understand that Edom itself, and every nation which, by a similar abuse of opportunities and by a similar practice of vice, makes itself a spiritual Edom, will, if it continue obstinately in the state of sin in which and against which it has been warned, then be overthrown in some such way as that threatened in the prediction; whereas, if the Edom (literal or spiritual) had repented of its evil practices, God would have repented him of the evil He had said He would do unto Edom. Thus, we do not for a moment entertain the groundless supposition that the Scripture writers had an insight into the world's future history at all more deep than is the forecast of thought to which every studious and reflecting man may now attain. But, with these views of ours, it always appears wonderful how broad and deep was the knowledge of man's soul which the Spirit of Christianity gave to simple and unlettered men such as the writers of the New Testament evidently were. If the reader will reflect, it will be observable that there has hardly, if ever, arisen an error, in these eighteen centuries, for which there might not be drawn an applicable word of reproof and correction from the treasury of Biblical wisdom. So true is this that many a thoughtful Protestant believes that in 1 Tim. iv. in 2 Thess. ii. and in several other passages, referring to the then present state of things, he sees a

prophecy of the Papacy: and, yet again, if we would only burst the scales of prejudice which dim our vision, we might see many a folly and many a fault of our own, the possibility of which is wholly new, rebuked right sharply in the ancient sayings of the Bible. It is on this principle that we explain the practice, resorted to by so many of our popular writers, of pointing their wit and sarcasm by some telling quotation of Holy Writ.* This full power of the Scriptures to rebuke every *new* fault, as it arises in the ages, and to correct offences that were unknown in Apostolic days, seems to us to betoken a profound and accurate knowledge of human nature as well as of the eternal principles of right and wrong: and, on this proof of the Bible's wisdom, we ground a fresh claim for reverential though intelligent submission to Scripture as an authority.

SECTION 9.—*The Bible teaches the universal Brotherhood of Man.*

WE have already noticed that the great and holy Socrates, as represented to us in the Republic of Plato, was in favour of a community of wives. His main object, in this curious freak, was that the children of the Republic might be *common*, that they might regard all middle aged citizens as their fathers and mothers, the elders as their grandparents, and those of a like age with themselves as their brothers and sisters. Now the good, which Socrates thus, by an enormous and shocking eccentricity, wished to secure to the members of his model state, the Bible provides, as far as teaching and institution can provide it, for all the children of men. Scripture tells us that they, whose

* Any man who reads the leading articles of *The Times* can hardly fail to be struck with the forcible applications of Scripture which, in those masterpieces of composition, are made to bite the new and ephemeral follies or vices of our age.

national antipathies are as old and as bitter as the feeling between the Jew and the Samaritan, are still neighbours who should love each other as they love self: and, again, the Holy volume tells us that God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth: it traces our common origin to one original couple: and it enforces the duty of love, benevolence, and helpfulness to one another, on this very consideration. In short it bases on our history, as traced to a common origin, and on our universal relation to the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, just such a bond of union and affection as Socrates longed for in his Republic: and, not a little remarkable is it, to find the very terms of the philosopher's wish realized in the Biblical precept "Entreat "an elder as a father; the younger men as brothers; "the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters "with all purity." Thus, when the Bible spirit is imbibed by the world, and when the injunctions of Holy Writ are obeyed, war and enmity will cease and the common brotherhood of man be recognised and established. It is because the Bible points to this blessed goal for the human race—because it quickens the thought, the hope, the desire of this peaceful day of progress for the nations—that we the more revere its wisdom and the more respectfully receive from it every other maxim which it charges us to obey if we approve.

SECTION 10.—*The Bible represents man's potentiality of good, as dependent on God indeed, but also as illimitable for all men.*

IN speaking on the subject of Inspiration we have already noticed the manner in which the Bible acknowledges every good and perfect gift—whether it be what we call power or skill or talent or cleverness

or genius—as coming down from the Father of lights and being wrought in us by the Spirit of God who giveth to every man severally as He will. We must not pass without attention one Biblical excellence, connected with this point, which we hold to be of inestimable advantage. In thus teaching that every good thing comes to man by the Inspiration of one who giveth wisdom, and all else that is truly good, liberally and without upbraiding, it is clear that the Bible makes man's power of attaining to excellence dependant on God, indeed, but, at the same time, wholly unlimited, so that it is with reason that the same book elsewhere bids us aspire to be perfect as our heavenly Father, and assures us that we may and ought to escape from corruption and become partakers of the divine nature. But is this high and attainable perfection so independent on God's bestowal that man must rest until the Deity confers on him some new boon? No such thing. Some advantages (*i.e.* some signs of the Spirit's having been with us, for without the Spirit the common hypothesis of all Christians is that there can be no good thing) are already possessed by all. Use we those advantages which have been given and more shall be given us: But may we omit to use such efforts after improvement as are within our reach because God's wont is to give more grace? Far from it. The Spirit only worketh *with us*: and by no means does Scripture represent Him as acting upon us as if we were unconscious agents who had no choice but to yield to the Spirit's unsought impulses. So fair is this listless, unintelligent and irresponsible theory of inspiration from being countenanced by Holy Writ, that the sacred volume solemnly reminds us that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. Thus then we find, in the scriptural teaching relative to the Holy Spirit's aid, these peculiarities: —viz. the assertion of man's illimitable potentiality of developement in the direction of virtue; the doctrine of man's being required to exert himself for the acquiring that

Spirit which he shall surely find if he seek it and receive if he ask; and, moreover, the recognition of man's power and responsibility in using the influences even of the Holy Spirit of God. There are other noticeable characteristics in the scriptural doctrine of the Spirit such as the inculcation of an appropriate and wise humility in the employment of whatever grace has been freely given to us: but we take our stand, for the present, on those excellences which we have named, and we put it to the reader whether the Book which can speak, with such surpassing wisdom, on a theme so apt to bewilder and to mislead as the doctrine of spiritual intervention and assistance, is not worthy to be received as a high and reverend authority in the study of every reflective man.

SECTION 11.—*The Bible handles, with singular Wisdom, the difficult subject of Prayer.*

ON the subject of Prayer how likely is even a wise man to be misled. In one extreme there lies the so-called philosophic notion which believes that, as all the present and the future are fore-known and fore-ordained by God, so no entreaty can change the succession and inter-dependency of cause and effect, and, so, all prayer must be a vanity. In the other extreme we find the vulgar and pernicious error which supposes that supplications, without prudence, will get a man a good wife; or prayer, without industry, will insure success; or prayer, without study, will bring knowledge; or prayer, without the right medical treatment, will accomplish cures; or, in a word, that urgent entreaties at the throne of grace may be substituted for the diligent employment of the several means proper for effecting each desired end. Between these sceptical and superstitious extremes there lie manifold modifications and combinations of error:

and we are far from saying that no error on this subject can find at least a plausible excuse for itself in some parts of the Bible: but we assert, without fear of contradiction, that he, who reads the sacred volume with a recollection and a practice of its own prescribed principle of Eclecticism, will find such instruction with reference to prayer as the following. With God there is no changeableness nor shadow of turning. If He *seem* to repent him of what he had said he would do, it is not he who is changed, but we who are now looking at him from one moral attitude whereas we were previously regarding the same unchangeable Being from another and a wholly different moral position. Such being the nature of God, prayer cannot change him. But the first scriptural element in prayer is fervent desire, the sentiment which lives in the dialogue "What wouldst thou have me to do unto "thee? Lord, that I might receive my sight!" Now, fervent desire, so earnestly entertained that we go to speak with God about it constantly and perseveringly, as did the widow in the parable of the unjust judge, will not change God; but it will to a certainty change us and our moral position.

Intelligent fulness of statement, without foolish repetition, is another scriptural element in prayer. How good is it, when the wishes are running impetuously after some thing which is thought desirable, to pause for a little moment and state to oneself, especially in writing, what it is one wishes! How often does such a statement disclose to our view the folly and the mischief which were latent in our wish and which would have been realized to our harm with our wish, if we had not by statement discovered the evil in time to abandon or modify our desire! Such a calm, self-discovering statement is indispensable to a scriptural prayer: but, with this further benefit attaching to it, namely that the Bible teaches us how God heareth prayer and how the same Holy Spirit, who without measure breathed through Jesu's patience

and pain and struggle and victory, does consult and deliberate with and counsel our spirits when, with fervent desire and with that other scriptural element of prayer, holy reliance on the love and power of God, we go to state solemnly our wishes at the throne of grace and to seek there for wisdom in selecting and employing means for the accomplishment of such wishes as we retain when we return from taking counsel with the Lord.

In this Biblically taught mode of prayer there is no cold scepticism which abandons prayer as useless, nor any weak superstition which strives in vain to change the will of the All-wise and break the indissoluble chain which links effect to cause. But, rather, in this manner of praying there is a pious and beautiful reliance on God, leading us to such a mental exercise as cannot fail to clear up our views, give definiteness to our aim, wisdom to our selection of means, and increased strength to our arm for action. Thus we see a deep and most intelligible truth in those words, which have been a stumbling-block to not a few, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in faith believing that ye shall "receive:" for, assuredly, though God remain unchangeable, yet such prayer as we have spoken of cleanses the heart of all impossible, improper and immoderate wishes, gives to the judgment clearness in selecting means and, by ever strengthening us in our wise and persevering exertions, doth change us and bring about, with the Divine blessing, the accomplishment of its own petitions. We know no other book, save the Bible, which has originated for man the knowledge of such wise and profitable elements in prayer; and for this, in addition to its many other boons, we honour the Bible as the highest fallible authority on earth.

Section 12.—*The Bible teaching as regards Spiritual Communion with God.*

There is one more, and only one more of the innumerable excellences in Scripture, to which we would draw the reader's attention. Not only does the Bible teach us that God is every where present and every where active: but it reveals to us a mystery that, if at all known, was by no means commonly discovered to man until the Bible and that religion, of whose trustworthy, contemporary records Scripture alone remains to us, declared it to mankind. The heathens were of old, and still are, wont to imagine that man must go to some temple or possess himself of some privileged charm in order to hold communion with the deity. The Bible teaches us that such a communion with the Highest and the Holiest, who is Love, is, in God's mercy, placed within the reach of every man, at every time, if he will only seek it with that disposition of heart and mind which is designated in Scripture as "worship in spirit and in truth." It is needless to argue in proof that a man's chosen and habitual companions affect his character. It is needless to prove by verbal statement that wise and loving associates are an inexpressible gain to man. They augment our enjoyment in time of prosperity. They solace our woe. They stimulate our good exertions. They counsel us in the way of wisdom when we are entangled amidst doubts and difficulties. "Ointment "and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness "of a man's friend by hearty counsel." "Iron sharp-"eneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of "his friend."*

If these things be so, what must be the effect on man's character of habitual heart-intercourse with the God, whose handiwork is seen in every creature, and whose "goodness reacheth to the clouds."

* Proverbs xxvii 9, 17.

What must be the effect of constantly recurring spiritual communion with the Allwise and the Allholy, who manifested his benevolence in Jesu's life and death, and showed his power in Jesu's resurrection? Great already has been the effect—in sanctifying and elevating the life of the slave and of the prince, in solemnizing and yet freeing from all terror that death-scene which awaits each one of us and in which we are to pass into the very seen presence of our God—great has been the effect of habitual and ever accessible spiritual communion with God. It has altered and ennobled the life of all who have availed themselves of its proffered blessings. It has felicitated the death of all who have learned in it to talk with God and to rejoice. Greater still and more world-embracing will this amelioration of human life and this beatifying of death become as the Bible, being more closely and more wisely studied, shall lead ever increasing multitudes to walk in spiritual communion with God and so to be prepared joyfully to depart and be with Him in a better and more enduring world.

It is because the Bible is the book which teaches the possibility of such communion with our heavenly Father and inculcates the happy duty of practising such communion at all times, under all circumstances and in all places, that we the more revere its sacred though fallible authority.

CHAPTER IV.

RESUME AND CONCLUSION OF THIS BOOK CLAIMING A SACRED AUTHORITY FOR THE BIBLE AS A FALLIBLE BUT INSPIRED VOLUME.

We have now suggested a few—very few of the grounds on which we claim for the Bible a deeply reverent, though a wholly reasonable, reception at the hands of every man. If we look to its antiquity it is venerable with its age of from two to three thousand years. If we seek for a trustworthy account of the origin and growth of that religion which Tacitus and Pliny assure us had marvellously revolutionized the religious ideas of the Roman world, the Bible is pointed to on all sides, by the men of every age and every church, by many unbelievers as well as by believers, as being the only contemporary document we can procure to aid us in such an interesting and important investigation.

Thus much of our present Book bespeaks attention and respect for the Bible before the student has opened its pages, and independently of all which has been said with special reference to its inspiration or the peculiar manifestation of God's teaching in it by the influence which his Holy Spirit had on the thoughts and sentiments of the sacred penmen. To the same feeling of reasonable respect for the Bible are we led by a consideration of the way in which this book, more than any other, has been the constant handmaid and attendant, if not the possible cause, of all great modern reforms and improvements. Thus, whilst the Bible is still as to its contents an unknown book to us, we are prepared to reverence it profoundly because of its antiquity, the information it can give, and the companionship it has held

with the great and with the good. But when, still further, the book is opened to our perusal—when, studying it in no unwarrantable search after an infallibility that must become fallible, or incomprehensible, the moment it comes into contact with our finite minds—when, thus exploring the sacred volume, we are led to notice how it equals the noblest flights of man's purest and highest thoughts, as they are written for us by the most eloquent of the Greeks—when we observe how the Bible possesses marked and peculiar excellences to contrast with the faults or extravagances of a Socrates—when we recognise the fact that not only is Scripture replete with beauties and excellences, which taken, indeed, one by one and in their isolation, could not all be matched even if we should select for the comparison the choicest portions of heathen literature—and when, moreover, we perceive that the Bible contains beauties and excellences which take in their combination, as they are found all of them in that one not bulky volume, constitute a wholly unparalleled and unique galaxy of moral and spiritual gems—when we thus see in the Bible, and in the Bible *first*, if not alone of books, a system of such principles as we have been noticing in these last pages—when we find how the Bible teaches us that in all things, upon trial, the evil to is be rejected and the good held fast—when we find the Bible maintaining the doctrine of the divine presence and activity every where—teaching that God is really "Love" and only appears otherwise when seen through the medium of sin—presenting for our adoring imitation a Saviour who can draw the rich and the poor and all men unto Him—giving rise to orderly reform from within outwards—prescribing change of mind and heart as alone necessary and alone acceptable in God's sight—providing reproof and correction for every conceivable error—pointing to and insisting on the common brotherhood of mankind—offering to all men spiritual aid as a stimulant of effort, not as a substitute for exertion or a remover of moral responsibility—teaching that Prayer is strong and thankful desire

chastened and guided by consultation with a God on whose goodwill the supplicant relies—representing spiritual communion with the Heavenly Father as possible for every child of man at all times—when, indeed, we see these and similar incomparable beauties and excellences all combined in one ancient, interesting, profitable book, then we say that the man who denies the authority of this book, because it partakes of human errors and frailties, is as unwise—must we not say as profane —as he who spurns the counsel or the entreaties of a sage and holy parent because he has occasionally known that parent to be in error.

Thus we claim for the Bible no infallibility: but we claim for it a filial readiness to regard all which it teaches as likely to be true and wise and good. We claim for it, at the hands of every reader, an abstinence from all flippant and coarse criticism. We claim for it a diligent examination of its contents; a scrupulous and unwilling, rather than a scornful, rejection of its errors; and a thankful compliance with that vast majority of its principles and precepts of which every conscience will approve. In claiming this authority, and no more than this, for Holy Writ, we may seem, no doubt, to be asking less than is generally deemed orthodox at present: but let the reader remember that there is such a thing as weakening a good cause by over-stating it—that there have been instances in which disgust and rebellion have been provoked by rulers unwisely laying claim to excessive and unlimited authority, when, by making more just and moderate claims, they would have established themselves in an unquestionable and most influential position of command. Even so we are convinced that it is better for the interest of Christianity, which is "the truth,"—better in every way, to base the high authority of Scripture on a consideration of that wisdom and excellence, which reading and reflection will abundantly vindicate for the Old and new Testaments, than

to rest a stupendous assertion of the Bible's divine authority on an idea of Biblical infallibility which reason does not uphold and which every fresh perusal of the sacred volume gives us some additional proof is untenable.

BOOK V.

BEARING OF OUR OPINIONS ON CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS AND CHRISTIAN MINISTERS.

CHAPTER I.

THESE VIEWS NOT INCOMPATIBLE WITH INTELLIGENT (SO CALLED) ORTHODOXY.

SECTION 1.—*What, in these remarks, belongs to the Clergy applies* a fortiori *to the Laity.*

OUR inquiries relative to the Inspiration, Infallibility and Authority of the Bible are now complete and this Essay might at once be concluded: but, for the sake of any readers whose previous experience and whose present convictions may incline—or rather it should be said, may compel—them to go with us in our argument and in our conclusion, we have, by the kind urgency of friends with whom we have discussed the subject of this Essay, been induced to add a few words with reference to the bearing of our views on the members of Christian communions in general and on the clergy, or teachers of such communions, especially. In doing this we shall address our observations to the clergy, as it is obvious that their position would be the more difficult and the more unhappy in the events of their supposing that their Christian faith was shaken or unsound. Whatever is thus addressed to the ministers cannot but apply with still greater force to the lay members of Christian Communities.

SECTION 2.—*One holding our views of Inspiration may well believe in the Trinity.*

AT the outset it is clear that a man's belief in God, in Christ, and in the Holy Ghost is not rendered impossible by his regarding the sacred volume as fallible, replete with the spirit of goodness, and generally authoritative, instead of regarding it as infallible.

A man may believe Scripture to be fallible and yet he may—as we ourselves do—believe Jesus to be the anointed son of God who came into the world and lived and died and rose again in order that we might learn through him to trust and love God our heavenly Father, and so loving and trusting Him might be and be accounted righteous. One may be assured that there are errors in Holy Writ and yet may believe—as we do and as all pious Jews and Christians have done—that man can do nothing, either physical, intellectual or spiritual, without the aid and upholding grace of the Holy Ghost. A man may see contradictions and discrepancies in the Bible: he may even deem the alleged *prophetical* evidence of the miraculous conception to be of no value whatever, and the *historical* evidence of the same fact to be quite insufficient for its support; and yet he may—as we ourselves do—believe the miracle of Mary's virgin conception simply because it is no more difficult than any other miracle, because it was manifestly believed by the early Christains, and, especially, because it is in keeping with the great and startling fact that God did wondrously send forth Jesus to be a unique Son of Man, to constitute the greatest epoch in the world's history, and to be in effect the second father and founder of our race. That He, who was thus excep-

tionally a man, should be exceptionally introduced into the world and should again exceptionally rise from the grave and leave the world—these unique and exceptional facts, of which one at least, namely the moral change effected by Jesus, is undeniable, seem to us to be in perfect harmony and keeping with each other and one of them not more difficult to reconcile with ordinary experience than another; and, therefore, we reverentially and thankfully believe them all as instances and manifestations of God's infinite and fatherly love for us and all his creatures. We believe these grand and Christianly consistent points whilst we gravely, though humbly, think it possible for a good Christian to doubt whether the evangelists were not misled by their own angry recollections, or by the error of such traditions as Luke tells us he followed, when—of Him, who said "Bless and curse not," and of whom it is recorded that He reviled not even when He was reviled, and, again, that He gently prayed for his crucifiers "Father, forgive them for they know "not what they do"—when of Him they say that he blasted a fig-tree with his curse because, as is especially recorded, it had no figs on it when "the time of "figs was not yet" (*vide* Mark xi. 13.)—when of our blessed Lord they say that He caused swine to be needlessly and uselessly destroyed in thousands, that He upset the tables of the money-changers and drove men out of the precints of the temple with a scourge, and that He designated the rulers of his country "foxes," "hypocrites" and a "generation of vipers."

SECTION 3.—*To believe the morally contradictory as impossible as to believe the physical cantradictory.*

SURELY there is no impiety, nor any disregard of, nor opposition to, Jesu's glad tidings, in thus disbelieving what does not commend itself to a man's most anxious judgment in reason, to his most careful exercise of conscience or to his firmest belief of the general evangelical portraiture of Jesus. Protestants do not excommunicate Luther or Calvin or others, the fathers of the German or the Swiss reformation, for such lax views about the Canon as it is notorious they entertained. If those men might reject whole books as "letters of straw" (so Luther called James's Epistle) and yet be deemed good Christians, must we be forbidden to style those Christ's disciples, and brothers of all who believe in Him, who while they love the dear old words and notions of all the Bible, yet feel constrained to deny the authority of such portions of Holy Writ as do not approve themselves to Christian consciousness, that is, to the best and purest knowledge which the teaching of Christ has made to become a part of these men's very selves? The idea is too preposterous to be entertained for a moment. Any man might as well be called a disbeliever of Christianity or of the Bible because it is impossible for him to believe that Paul's companions, on his famous journey to Damascus, both *did hear* the voice (Acts ix. 7.) and *did not hear* the voice (Acts xxii. 9.), both *saw* and *did not see*. To call men unbelievers, because they cannot credit what, in their judgment, is a moral contradiction of the Bible's own glorious description of Jesus, is as wise and as charitable as to defame a man for not being able to assent, at one time, to any two contradictory assertions.

Let us, who believe the Bible to be fallible, inspired and authoritative, be tried by any New Testament principle and it will be found that we believe all that

ever was required to be believed by Paul or Philip or any other teacher whose mode of procedure in admitting men to church membership, is made known to us in Scripture. Thus, then, we are clearly entitled to enrol ourselves, and to be recognized in the number of those who profess and call themselves Christians, or who, in other words, constitute the universal church of Christ.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE MINISTERS OF ANY DENOMINATION.

But next arises the question whether those, who deny the infallibility of Scripture and yet acknowledge its inspiration and authority, can and should remain in the ministries of the several churches. It is quite impossible that we should argue out this question with reference to each individual community even of English Christians: but we shall perhaps do enough to meet the wishes of all readers if we offer two general considerations that apply to the ministers of all sects alike, and if we then lay down a few observations with special reference to that section of Christ's church with which we are ourselves connected and which is by law established in this realm of England.

A.—We do not deny the Inspiration of the Bible.

Our first general observation is that so far from denying the Inspiration of the Bible, we strenuously

assert that Inspiration; and our attempt is to vindicate for the term "Scriptural Inspiration" its real meaning in order that we may both preserve the general historical credibility of Holy Writ and also raise the popular idea of Inspiration, away from its present untenable notion of infallibility, high above the conception which often confounds "divine inspiration" with "genius" if not with "cleverness." Thus then, if any minister feels himself constrained to agree with us that the Bible, though inspired and of great authority, is not infallible, and if he feels, also, that the formularies of his church, to which he has pledged his assent, either imply or assert the doctrine of the Bible's Inspiration, such a minister need be in no alarm. He has only, with prudence and fidelity, to teach a truer and better doctrine of biblical inspiration than he before knew or dared to entertain, in the same manner as he is surely accustomed to teach every other doctrine better and more clearly in proportion as his own views of it are enlarged and corrected by reading and by reflection. This remark is, we think, sufficient to satisfy most cases: but, if there be any reader who while he agrees with our view of Inspiration and Infallibility is pained by a consciousness that the formularies of his church either explicitly declare or otherwise imply the infallibility of Scripture, in such a case our second general observation may be worthy of attention.

B.—Jesus would not Dissent though he Differed.

It is a truth full, as we think, of importance yet seldom, if ever, noticed that although the Jews expunged from their synagogue one at least of Jesu's disciples merely because he glorified the Lord by whom

his sight had been miraculously restored to him; and, although we are distinctly told that Jesus knew and noticed this excommunication, yet He never felt it necessary to sever himself or dissent from the established, but no longer divinely required, Judaism of his day: and yet, moreover, never, except in cases of the most stubborn obstinacy or the direct necessity, did the Apostles, as far as the Bible informs us, think it right to separate themselves and formally dissent from the Jewish church. In the good providence of God the Jews never seem to have ventured on *excommunicating* Jesus though they dared to kill him. To the last He taught publicly in the temple and in the synagogues. He knew well how widely his principles differed from those which had the sanction of the rulers in that church with which He worshipped and in whose religious festivals He bore a part. He knew that his principles, which were questioned by the priests, had the authority of truth, whilst many of their principles and practices bore the stamp of error not to say of guilt. Yet, as long as Judaism would bear him or his followers, it was his divine wish that neither they nor He should sever themselves from the community in which they had been born and educated. The conservative and the reforming elements were both strong in our Saviour's mind. He would have every society get rid of its faults and develop its ideal in new improvements: but He would have such amelioration to proceed from within the society itself, of its own free choice and deliberate action. He would have every man work out his best and most reforming thoughts: but He would have the man continue in his calling and so improve himself and his coadjutors. He looked on truth, to the knowledge of which a man is brought, as leaven put within that man by the heavenly father that it might leaven first the man himself, then his immediate circle of acquaintance, and, last not least, the whole brotherhood of mankind. Thus

it appears that our Lord's plan was to develop the true germs of Judaism into the perfection of Christianity, and, by the truth of Christianity, to enable Judaism to cast away its errors. He had no design to abolish one religion and set up another in its stead: but He would strengthen and elevate the one by the engrafting of the other. He had no desire to promote rivalry between the two systems which, since our Lord's day, have ranged themselves as antagonists under the several banners of Moses and of Jesus.

Now, if Christ is to be our example and our teacher, should we not obey and imitate Him in this? Should we not, as ministers and teachers, be content to abide in our several high vocations as long as they who bear the rule will allow us? If they expel us for teaching what we conceive to be important truth and what, therefore, we are bound not to suppress, let the responsibility of so tearing themselves away from some of the members of Christ's mystical body—the sin of such schism—let it rest with them and not with us.

On this ground, then, we would, on the one hand, urge every man to look well to it that he do not allow vanity, or eccentricity, or mere love of change to seduce him into embracing—still less into promulgating—any new opinions which he has not solemnly and conscientiously examined and which, if promulgated, would require the faithful rulers of his church to expel him; and, on the other hand, we would entreat no man lightly to sever himself from the ministry to which he has been called by the providence and grace of God and in which he has power and opportunity to teach improving truth and so to carry on a Christ-like reformation from within. Brother, we would say to such an one, let the rulers expel thee for thy manly avowal of truth if unhappily they will: but do thou

remember Jesus and the Apostles ; and do not expel thyself, and so, weakening thine own influence for good, increase the love-concealing multitudes of sectarianism.

CHAPTER III.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS APPLYING TO THE CLERGY OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

If from these general remarks we turn to the particular case of the established church in England, it may be asked what portion, of the Law or of her formularies, is there which we transgress.

A.—We are not touched by the Law against Blasphemy.

We are aware that the English Statute Book still regards "blasphemy" as a punishable offence: but we are persuaded that not even they, who may most widely differ from the opinions we have expressed in these pages, can, with any regard for truth, charge us with having treated the Bible, or Christianity, or any sacred thing lightly or irreverently. If, from general enactments, recourse be had to particular laws, we can suppose that the more or less bigoted character of the Act of Uniformity might bring it to the recollection of some who would like to repress this discussion by authority: but, here as in all other quarters, we believe and hope that the persecuting wish will fail to find any legal sanction of its desires towards us.

B.—THE ACT OF UNIFORMITY CONDEMNS US NOT.

OF the Act of Uniformity we may approve or disapprove. The assent and consent it requires—to what has been described as an Arminian Liturgy and a collection of Calvinistic Articles—we may think to be of a good or of an evil tendency on the morality and intelligence of our religious teachers. But, whatever be our opinions of this Statute, which comes to us from the tyrannical Stuarts and which is still the chief test of English orthodoxy, we have yet to learn that the Act of Uniformity requires we should hold the Bible to be *infallible;* or, indeed, that it requires us to hold any particular theory of Inspiration. It is to the Book of Common Prayer that this Act points, and for that Book that it demands our unfeigned assent and consent to all the Calvanism, or Arminianism, or both, which any man may think is therein contained.

C.—IN THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, NEITHER THE CREEDS, THE ORDINAL, THE LITURGY, NOR THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES ARE OPPOSED TO US.

WELL then let us turn to the Book of Common Prayer. What do its Creeds or Articles pledge us to on the subject of Biblical infallibility or inspiration? The Nicene Creed teaches us that the "Holy Ghost "spake by the prophets." This we do not doubt, for we believe that the blessed Spirit, who is "the giver "of life," speaks in every good word and that He especially spoke by the mouths of the "goodly fellow-"ship of the prophets." The Articles assure us that

the three Creeds are to be believed because "they "may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy "Scripture" ["firmissimis Scripturarum testimoniis "probari possunt."] To this, again, we heartily assent; for whatsoever we read in Scripture we are prepared to receive respectfully and judge reverently: whatsoever can be *proved* by any means, drawn from any source, we are ready to believe: and above all, whatsoever can be proved by the most satisfactory evidence of the Scriptures, *that* we shall assuredly not be slow devoutly to believe.

As to what are the "most certain warrants of holy "Scripture," the seventeenth Article does not fail to give us some very valuable information. By no means do its noticeable words tell us that every isolated verse is such a warrant: but, rather, the last paragraph of the 17th Article implies that some passages are so far from being infallible that they might lead us astray if we did not limit their meaning and so correct them by other and truer passages. This, we say, and no less than this, is implied and cannot fail to be understood by every careful and unprejudiced reader of the following words in this Article; "We "must receive God's promises in such wise as they be "*generally* set forth to us in holy Scripture: and in "our doings that Will of God is to be followed which "we have expressly declared unto us in the word of "God." Is not this the very principle of Eclecticism for which we contend as a prime excellence in the Bible?

One more use, which the Articles make of Scripture, is as a barrier beyond which they are not prepared to find any truth which is essential to Christianity. It was not probable that any points, which were indispensable, and without which the gospel would be but a marred and incomplete religion, should be wholly omitted and never so much as mentioned or referred to by the Christians of the first century who

penned the four Gospels, the book of the Acts, the numerous Epistles and the Apocalypse. This the English Reformers felt: and they knew at the same time that the Romanists were adding to the list of Christian essentials countless points which they drew from ecclesiastical traditions, from the decisions of councils, and from various other sources. As an answer to all these traditional and other supernumerary alleged essentials, our Reformers—believing that all the essentials of Christianity were contained in holy Scripture, whose history reaches no later than A. D. 100 at the latest—wrote and agreed to the sixth Article in the words, "Holy Scripture containeth all things neces-"sary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read "therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be re-"quired of any man, that it should be believed as an "Article of the Faith or be thought requisite or neces-"sary to salvation." Thus to say that all the essential articles of Christain faith are contained in the Bible is altogether different from saying that all statements contained in the Bible are essential articles of Christian faith. The former assertion, which is put forth in the sixth Article, we thoroughly believe. The latter idea, which is not to be found in any part of the book of Common Prayer, we reject.

Similarly, in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Articles, the authority of the Church and of General Councils is limited by that which is the true, general purport of Holy Writ. Neither Church nor Council may add any thing to the list of essentials prescribed in Scripture; nor yet may Church or Council abolish any thing or ordain any thing contrary to the *general** setting forth or doctrine of "God's Word written."

Here again then the Articles by no means lay down

* We are obviously justified in introducing this word "general" because of what has been already noticed as the last paragraph Article xvii.

for us any definite theory of Inspiration nor do they require from us any belief in the Bible's infallibility. Indeed, we may repeat, for it should be remembered, that this last belief is directly though implicitly contravened by the precept of the Seventeenth Article that men must be on their guard against being misled by isolated passages even of Holy Writ. If, from the Act of Uniformity and the Articles, we turn to the Liturgy, we find many references to the Holy Scriptures mingled with the various devotional exercises which are prescribed for the worship of the Congregation. At a few of these it will be proper to glance for a moment. There is the well-known Collect, for the second Sunday in Advent, "Blessed Lord, who "hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our "learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that by "patience and comfort of thy Holy Word we may em- "brace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of ever- "lasting life which thou hast giveu us in our Saviour "Jesus Christ."

The common understanding of this Collect is that God has caused the Bible, or the Old and New Testament volumes, to be written for man's benefit. This we fully believe as we believe that God has caused every wise and good book or part of a book to be written for human advantage. Yea, we thankfully acknowledge that, inasmuch as the Bible is the best and holiest book—inasmuch as, to use the eloquent language of the great Coleridge, "in the Bible there is "more that *finds* me than I have experienced in all "other books put together; and the words of the Bi- "ble find me at greater depths of my being; and what- "ever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence "of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit"—therefore the Bible was more divinely "caused to be "written" than any other book. In this Collect then, which some have thought would be a difficulty for us,

we join heartily in that which all intend should be its meaning; and we have, besides, a deeper and a richer signification which we add to its common meaning.

None can join more devoutly than we wish to do in the beautiful supplication of the Litany that our "Good "Lord may deliver us from all hardness of heart and "contempt of his Word and Commandment." Whatever is "God's Word and Commandment" we pray for grace to know and revere as such: and towards that whole book which so pre-eminently contains the teaching of our heavenly Father that it may without a misnomer be popularly called—as indeed it is called in the preface to the Common Prayer—"the pure "Word of God," we profess, and we strive to inculcate the profoundest and most affectionate regard that is consistent with a reasonable examination of those Scriptures which God has given to us his rational creatures in order that we may search and try them and, rejecting error, may hold fast what is good.

We, who believe the Bible to be fallible but inspired and of the highest authority, find no difficulty, but, contrariwise, we experience the most intense spiritual delight, in beseeching the Lord to endue us with the grace of his Holy Spirit that we may "amend our "lives according to his holy Word." In the exhortation to Communion we find no difficulty in understanding the wisdom of the advice given to him who cannot himself quiet the troubles of his conscience: Let him go to some discreet and learned Minister of God's Word and open his grief in order that "by the "ministry of God's holy Word he may receive the "benefit of absolution." Neither in these nor in any other portions of the Book of Common Prayer do we find that a conscientious remembrance of our views regarding inspiration causes us any difficulty in assenting to each explicit statement or tacit implication

in which the whole Bible is called in one sense "the "pure Word of God" as opposed to and esteemed far higher than every other composition, or in which certain portions of the Bible are in another sense called "the Word of God" as expressing to us the requirements of the Divine Will.

By those indeed who, in their, as we think, mistaken jealousy and narrowness of spirit, wish either to compel us to an agreement with their own opinions or else to expel us from their communion, it may yet further be urged that the Homilies, to an approval of which all Church Ministers are pledged by the thirty-fifth Article, so distinctly oppose, and imply a condemnation of, our belief of Biblical fallibility that they not unfrequently describe the Bible as an "infal- "lible" writing. As a rejoinder to this we say plainly that the thirty-fifth Article only asserts generally that the Homilies "contain a godly and wholesome "doctrine." This, we take it, by no means pledges any man to assent and consent to every detail of opinion and argument advanced in the two books of Homilies: and we fearlessly put it to the good conscience of the members of each party in the ministry whether there were not points which they disliked and from which they wholly dissented when they last carefully examined the Homilies. For instance, let one, who brings the Homilies to condemn our acknowledging the manifest and proven fallibility of the Canonical Scriptures, remember that, not only do the said Homilies sometimes refer to the Apocryphal writings under the designation of "Scripture," but, in "the first part of the Sermon of Obedience" (pp. 96, 97, Oxf. edit. 1844.) the Homilist urges the duty of orderly submission to constituted authorities on the following consideration:—"Let us consider," he says, "*the Scriptures of the Holy Ghost* which persuade and "command us all obediently to be subject, first and "chiefly to the King's Majesty supreme governor over

"all, and the next to his honourable council, and to "all other noblemen, magistrates and officers, which "by God's goodness be placed and ordered. For Al- "mighty God is the only author and provider for this "fore-named state and order as it is written of God "in the book of the Proverbs (viii. 15, 17.) Also *in* "*the book of Wisdom*, we may evidently learn, that a "king's power, authority, and strength, is a great ben- "efit of God; given of His great mercy, to the com- "fort of our great misery. For thus we read there "(Wisdom vi. I—3.) spoken to kings, 'Hear, O ye "kings, and understand; learn ye that be judges of "the ends of the earth: give ear, ye that rule the "multitudes; for the power is given you of the Lord, "and the strength from the highest.' Let us learn "also *here by the infallible and undeceivable Word of* "*God*, that kings, and other supreme and higher offi- "cers, are ordained of God, who is most highest: and "therefore they are *here* taught diligently to apply "and give themselves to knowledge and wisdom "necessary for the ordering of God's people to their "governance committed, or whom to govern they are "charged of God. And they be *here also taught by* "*Almighty God*, that they should acknowledge them- "selves to have all their power and strength not from "Rome, but immediately of God most highest." Thus do the Homilies speak of other writings, besides the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, as "the Scriptures of the Holy Ghost," "the teaching of "Almighty God," and even as "the infallible and un- "deceivable word of God." Will not multitudes of our worthy and most strongly *anti-apocryphal* pro- testant brother-clergymen join us in withholding "as- "sent and consent" from this doctrine of the Homi- lies? Similarly we disbelieve and therefore we take permission to differ from the teachings of the Homil- ists on the subject of *Scriptural* Infallibility. The homilies, doubtless, would condemn our opinions re-

garding inspiration. We at once concede this : but the question is not, Do the Homilies, but does the Book of Common Prayer condemn our opinion ? We have seen already in several instances that neither the Articles nor the Liturgy are opposed to us. If any portion of the Book of Common Prayer does condemn or oppose our opinions we know it not : and it is for those, who differ from us on this subject, to point out such our condemnation.

We shall now conclude these observations by a reference to the questions which the Church of England appoints shall be asked of candidates for Holy Orders. In these questions there is frequent mention of Holy Writ; so that here, if any where, one would expect the candidate for holy Orders in the several degrees of the ministry to be publicly challenged as to his opinions regarding such very important points as Scriptural Inspiration and infallibility. Yet here, as before, we find not a syllable breathed on either of these topics : but the future Deacon is asked "Do you "unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of "the Old and New Testament?" The only answer required by the Church is "I do believe them." This answer we could not only give in the sense in which it is given by every intelligent man : but we, with our views, could say moreover, "I do believe them ; "not merely when they tell me such obvious historical "and philosophical truth as that Jesu's is the only "scheme by which men can and must be saved or "brought to true happiness in this life and true fitness "for enjoying a future world ; but I also believe them, "with the most humble and comfortable assurance, "when—by the palpable evidence of errors, discrep- "ancies and self-contradictions—they tell me that, "although they contain the Word of God, they yet "are themselves fallible and, like the best of those "who wrote them, they have this treasure in earthen "vessels that the excellency of the power may be of

"God and not of man nor yet of any book written by "a man."* Thus can we, with a good conscience and an intelligent thoughtfulness, go along with and assent to this important question and its answer in the Ordering of Deacons. Nor does the query "Will you "diligently read the Scriptures unto the people as- "sembled in the Church?" cause us any pain except in so far as it reminds us, to our sorrow, that some Deacons and others seem, from their negligence in reading the blessed book, to have forgotten that they gave "I will" as their answer to this solemn question.

From the candidate for the higher degrees in the English ministry it is required that he should declare, in answer to several questions, that he believes all the essentials of Christianity are contained in the Bible; that he will not attempt to describe anything as essential to Christianity which is not so described, explicitly or implicitly, in Scripture; that he will diligently and piously study and teach the true meaning of Holy Writ; and that he will be "ready, with "all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all "erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's "word." After what we have written on the subject of the 6th, 8th, 20th, and 21st Articles there is obviously nothing in these questions and answers which has a semblance of clashing with our views of Biblical fallibility, except, indeed, any should think that the question about "driving away erroneous and strange "doctrines contrary to God's word" may affect us. If any reader should so think for a moment, let him remember that, instead of our Essay being "contrary to "God's word," we have, throughout our investigations, been acting in accordance with such illimitable precepts of the Bible as "Search the Scriptures to see if "these things which are commonly reported about "Inspirational Infallibility be so:" "Try all things—

* *Vide* 2 Corinthians iv. 7.

"yea, even spirits and spiritual things—to see if they "be of God—so try all things and, having tried, hold "fast that which is good." Thus then our doctrine is not contrary to, but in exact accordance with, God's word. As to whether our doctrine is "strange"—if here the term denote novelty—it may suffice if the reader will remember how long it is since he felt the dreadful suspicion—which even now occasionally returns to haunt him—that there are errors in the Bible. If this do not satisfy him, let him ask any of the stanchest Christian believers how many years it is since they first experienced such misgivings and how they succeeded in finally and *satisfactorily* dispelling the monstrous idea that an infallibly inspired book has errors in it. He may safely ask this question of any intelligent Christian: and we are quite sure that all the answers he will get will either be uncandid and unintelligible, or they will resolve themselves into the simple formula, "The blessed and holy "book is inspired: and it is also fallible." If any reader should still think that our views on scriptural fallibility are objectionably novel, let him (as we have before said and as we again venture to advise) read Tholuck's brief but luminous account of the history of the doctrine of Inspiration, which was published in the April and May numbers of the Deutsche Zeitschrift in 1850, and of which an imperfect translation was given in the July and August numbers of an English periodical, called "Evangelical Christendom," in 1850.* So far we shall stand acquitted of "strange-"ness" and of being opposed to God's word. If, moreover, what has been written in these pages be, in part or as a whole, "erroneous," let the wise and charitable reader, who sees the fault, be good enough to point it out and then the writer will endeavour to show, in deed and not in word only, how sincerely he assents to the pledge, taken from every priest at his

* Publishers, Partridge & Oakey, London.

ordination, to be ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word. Meanwhile we can, with an undoubting conscience, continue our own Christian ministrations ; and we strenuously and affectionately urge each reader to do likewise.

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION.

On the whole then it appears to us that there are abundant and most satisfactory grounds on which we claim, and may reasonably hope to vindicate for the Bible, the highest authority that can attach to any thing save God and God's vicegerent Conscience. The reverence, which we regard as due to Holy Writ in consideration of the part which the Bible has taken in the history of the world—in consideration of the tendencies which are discernible in the pages of the Bible—and in consideration that all good things derive their excellence from the presence or influence of God's Holy Spirit, is of the same kind but of an incomparably higher degree than the submission which may be claimed from his offspring by a wise and loving parent. Thus, because of its goodness, we are convinced that the Bible is richly inspired and of high authority: but, at the same time, the facts, which are apparent on the face of the inspired writings themselves, altogether forbid our entertaining the idea of inspirational infallibility.

In this state of the case it is observable that, on the one hand, no valid reason can be shown in support of the popular misconception regarding biblical infallibility; whilst, on the other hand, its origin, growth and prevalence may be easily accounted for by a remembrance of the real sanctity of the inspired volume, the convenience and requirements of all theologians in their controversies, and the credulity and superstition of the unlearned multitude.

Throughout this entire volume it has been our endeavour to uphold the just sacredness of Scripture

while we have striven to overthrow the idea of scriptural infallibility: and this we have laboured to accomplish under the avowed and deep conviction that the effects of this idea have been so banefully pernicious in numbing and deadening the faith of the earnest, the simple-minded and the thoughtful that we, as lovers of the truth, are bound to oppose it and, as far as in us lies, to banish and drive it away as an erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word.

Let any, who feel this conviction, take part with us in pulling down that which is false and in building up the truth. Let all so labour with energy, with prudence, with love, and, if need be, even under persecution: and let this be our sacrifice and thankoffering to our heavenly Father for that He hath removed from our minds a parasitical excrescence which would have lessened, if it did not destroy, our spiritual joy and peace. Let this be our thankoffering inasmuch as the credibility of any or of all the sacred writings—which rests in the estimation of all men, on proper and peculiar foundations wholly apart from Inspiration—comes to our Judgment supported by proofs which are for us the stronger because they will not be invalidated, but, on the contrary, will be confirmed, by our discovering in Holy Writ such inaccuracies and discrepancies as denote, in every trustworthy and contemporaneous history, the presence of unsophisticated testimony and the absence of collusion.

From some of us, my brethren lay and clerical—would to God it might be said from all—the dream of an infallible Book has passed as thoroughly away as ever melted from before the eyes of Luther the mist-cloud of an infallible Pope, or, as ever vanished from a man, who had learned to know his own heart, the notion of an infallible Self.

If truth, like Rachel of old, has carried off the superstitious teraphim of our traditional, bibliolatrous belief in the Bible's infallibility, let us not, like Laban, waste time and energy in seeking to recover those

vain and cumbrous idols: but, rather, let us thank God and take courage because He, who of old spake to the fathers by the prophets and who in these last times hath spoken by His son, hath confirmed the tidings of salvation to us by the testimony of those who heard the Lord; so that, whatever we may have lost, we have found Him, who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth—who seeketh such to worship Him—and who hath given and doth fulfil, to every earnest follower, a promise of Inspiration, even a promise of the Spirit of truth to dwell with us and be in us, the Comforter who shall abide with us for ever.

THE END.

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Macnaught BS
480
The doctrine of inspiration .M25